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ESSAY
ON THE
K I N G D O M
O F
C H R I S T.

By ABRAHAM BOOTH.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

The Doctrine of the Covenants.

WHEREIN IS SHOWN

That there never was a covenant of WORKS made
with ADAM; nor any other COVENANT ever
made with MAN, respecting things purely of a
SPIRITUAL NATURE.

By SAMUEL JONES, A. M.

They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom.

Psal. cxiv. 11.

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P R E F A C E.

THE kingdom of Christ is a subject of great importance: for, according to the views we have of that kingdom will our conclusions be, respecting various branches of religious conduct. If tho'e views be imaginary, these conclusions must be false. by the former, the glory of the Messiah's regal character will be obscured: by the latter, his worship will be corrupted: whereas the true doctrine concerning this holy empire, may not only be the mean of preserving from those evils, but of presenting us with data for the decision of many disputes among the professors of Christianity. A competent acquaintance, therefore, with its nature and laws, its emoluments and honors, is closely connected with our duty and our happiness: which acquaintance must be derived from divine Revelation.

Important, however, as the subject is, it has been but seldom professedly discussed. This consideration was a leading motive to the present attempt. To illustrate the nature of our Lord's Kingdom, and to infer the conclusions flowing from it, constitute the design of this Essay.

The author has expressed his thoughts with great freedom; yet without intending the least offence to any party of Christians, or to any person, from whose notions and practices he conscientiously differs. In the course of discussion he animadverts, indeed, on some particulars, with a degree of severity: but then they appear to him in the light of political artifices, which either impeach the dominion of Christ in his own kingdom; or degrade and corrupt it.

worship which he requires. Now, in cases of this kind, the writer is of opinion, that allegiance to the King Messiah, and true benevolence to man, demand the language of marked opposition.

Such is the nature of our Lord's empire, that few of his loyal subjects can seriously reflect upon it, without feeling themselves both delighted and reprov'd. delighted ; because it is for the honor of their Mediator, to be the Sovereign of a spiritual monarchy. A character of this kind apparently suits the dignity of his Person, the design of his mediation, and the riches of his grace.—Reprov'd ; because they daily find a want of that spirituality in their affections, and of that heavenly mindedness, which become the professed subjects of such a kingdom. When meditating on the characteristics of this holy empire, they stand convicted before its divine Sovereign of much carnality and worldly mindedness, over which they sincerely mourn : while merely nominal subjects of the King Messiah, or superficial professors of the gracious gospel, are but little concerned about the state of their hearts, in reference to heaven ; or with regard to the spirituality of their worship.

This being the case with multitudes, the author would not be much surpris'd, were various particulars in the following pages to prove disgusting to the taste of numbers professing godliness. But facts are stubborn things ; and the sayings of Jesus Christ must not be explained away, that conscience may rest in a

false peace, or that the public taste may be gratified For, when thinking of our Sublime Sovereign, Thy Kingdom come, is the language of every upright heart, let carnal professors and the profligate world say what they please.*

ABRAHAM BOOTH.

Goodman's Fields, July 30, 1788.

*LUTHER says, Potiūs quam aliquid Regno Christi et Gloriæ ejus decedat, ruat non solum pax sed cœlum et terra. *Loci Commun. Class. iv. p. 35.*



E S S A Y &c.

IT having been revealed by ancient Prophets, that the Lord Messiah should be a King, and have universal empire, the chosen tribes in every age expected his appearance under the regal character. While, however, the general idea of that expectation was fully warranted by the spirit of prophecy, the bulk of Abraham's natural posterity were under a gross mistake, respecting the true design of their Messiah's appearance, and the real nature of his kingdom : which mistake had the most pernicious influence upon their temper and conduct, when the gracious promise of his coming was fulfilled.

The sense which they affixed to prophecies respecting the great Redeemer, was manifestly such as flattered their pride and fostered their carnality. This gave it a decided advantage, in their estimation, over that for which our Lord and his Apostles contended ; and led them to overlook whatever in the ancient Oracles opposed their secular views. Ignorant of their spiritual wants, and flushed with a false persuasion of interest in Jehovah's peculiar favor, on the ground of carnal descent from Abraham, & of the Covenant made at Horeb ; the doctrine, example, and claims of Christ, were extremely offensive. Not appearing as a temporal prince, discovering no disposition to free them from the Roman

yoke, and frequently addressing their consciences with keen reproof, on account of pride hypocrisy, superstition and covetousness; they rejected with determined opposition all the evidences of his divine mission, treated him as an impostor, &c. procured his crucifixion.—After he was risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, multitudes of them indeed believed, and professed the Christian faith: but a great majority of the nation continued in hardened impenitence, and persecuted the Apostles with unrelenting malevolence. Thus they proceeded till, divine forbearance being exhausted, *wrath came upon them to the uttermost*, in the total subversion of their civil and ecclesiastical polity.

This mistake of the Jews, respecting the kingdom of their Messiah, lying at the foundation of all the opposition with which they treated him, and of their own ruin; it behoves us to guard with diligence against every thing which tends to secularize the dominion of Christ: lest, by corrupting the Gospel Oeconomy, we dishonor the Lord Redeemer, and be finally punished as the enemies of his government. Our danger of contracting guilt, and of incurring divine sentiment in this way, is far from small. For we are so conversant with sensible objects, and so delighted with exterior show, that we are naturally inclined to wish for something in the religion of Jesus, to gratify our carnality. Under the influence of that master prejudice, *the expectation of a temporal kingdom*, Jewish depravi-

ty rejected Christ ; and our corruption, if we be not watchful, may so misrepresent his empire, and oppose his royal prerogatives, as implicitly to say, *We will not have him to rule over us.*

Among the numerous admirable sayings of Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, that stand recorded in the New Testament, and are adapted to instruct us in this important subject ; there is one which deserves peculiar notice. The saying to which I advert, is part of that *good confession* which our Lord witnessed before Pontius Pilate ; *My kingdom is not of this world.* A concise, but comprehensive declaration, and worthy of him that made it !—This capital saying may be considered as the grand maxim on which he formed his conduct when among men ; and it is pregnant with needful instruction to all his disciples, respecting the New Oeconomy and the Christian Church. Relative to matters of that kind, there is not, perhaps, a more interesting passage in all the New Testament ; nor one which is better adapted to rebuke the pride and carnality of millions who bear the Christian character. To approve of Christ as a spiritual monarch, agreeably to the meaning and tendency of this emphatical text, requires a degree of heavenly mindedness which comparatively few possess.

My kingdom is not of this world, says Messiah the Prince, when standing before the roman governor, and questioned about his claim of dignity.

He boldly avows himself a king ; yet, while advancing his title to the honors, of royalty, he tacitly informs Pilate that the civil rights of Cesar had nothing to fear from him ; and that his own disciples had no advantages to expect, of a secular kind, as the result of embarking in his cause——Our Lord, a little while before, had implicitly conveyed the idea of this declaration by receiving from a surrounding multitude the acclamations due to his royal character, when *riding upon an ass* : for while he accepted the honours of royalty, the poverty and meanness of his appearance plainly implied, that his kingdom was not of a temporal kind. Zechariah had foretold that the children of Zion should loudly rejoice in this humble manifestation of the King Messiah, and that their joy should kindle into rapture. An incontrovertible evidence that he predicted the public inauguration of a Sovereign whose *kingdom is not of this world*. For the loyal and affectionate subjects of a political monarch never thought it matter of exultation, that he appeared among them, when proclaimed king, with all the marks of meanness and of poverty. Yet so it was in respect of the King Messiah.

It is generally allowed, if I mistake not, that the kingdom of Christ is no other than the gospel Church* ; which is both distinguished from

*Regnum Dei in evangelia, says WITSIUS. vix ali-
significatione venit quam ut notet statum eximium et
vere liberum Ecclesiæ Testamenti Novi sub Rege-

KINGDOM OF CHRIST ix

world and opposed to it. Relative to this gdom, and its divine Sovereign, Jehovah says *we set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*. This prophetic Oracle was fulfilled when our Lord, *ding captivity captive*, ascended on high and sat on the right of the eternal Father. Then he most solemnly inaugurated and proclaimed King of the New Testament Church, amidst a throng of myriads of attendant angels, and *spirits of men made perfect*. In pursuance of which most august investiture in his regal office, he distributed al donatives, at the feast of Pentecost, among devoted subjects—such donatives, as perfected the majesty of his Person, and the name of his kingdom. Yes, that wonderful assemblage of spiritual gifts and heavenly graces which he bestowed upon his disciples at the Jewish festival, was a glorious first-fruit of his ascension, and of his being *a priest upon his throne*. The Gospel Church, which is the subject of his laws, the seat of his government, and the object of his care, being surrounded with powerful opposers; is represented as ruling *in the midst of his enemies*. Nor shall his mediatorial kingdom & administration cease till all those enemies become footstool.

The empire of Christ, indeed, extends to every creature: for *all authority in heaven and on earth* is in his hands, and he is *head over all things to the Church*. But the kingdom of which

we treat, stands distinguished from that of general Providence, as well as from every political state. It must be considered, therefore, as consisting of those persons whom he bought with his blood, whom he calls by his grace, and over whom he reigns as a spiritual monarch. These constitute what is frequently called, the Catholic Church, wherever the favored individuals may reside. Of such also, or of those who make a credible profession of being such, all those particular churches consist, which constitute our Lords' visible kingdom—that kingdom of which we speak. Into the principal characteristics of this holy empire, and into the genuine consequences of those criteria, we shall now enquire.

The Gospel Church is a kingdom not of this world, in regard to its origin. From the time of Nimrod to the present age, secular empires have generally originated in the vile passions of their first founders : for, in almost every instance, avarice and pride, ambition and a lust of dominion, have been conspicuous—Not so, in the kingdom of Christ. The remote foundation of his dominion was laid in the counsels of Heaven before time commenced, by all comprehending wisdom and infinite goodness, for the glory of God and the benefit of man : and the immediate basis on which it stands, is his own vicarious obedience to divine law : both as to its precepts, and as to its penalty. Justice and goodness, therefore are the foundation of his throne. Mercy and truth attend the whole of his administration.

The kingdom of Christ is not of this world. respecting the subjects of his righteous government. The generality of people in all countries, were *born* subjects of those governments under which they lived. No sooner, for instance, were we capable of reflecting upon our civil connections, than we found ourselves freeborn subjects of the British crown: and thus it commonly is in the sovereignties of secular princes. Their dominion being confined to the exterior of human conduct and not reaching the heart; natural birth and local circumstances constitute subjects of the state, put them under the protection of law, and invest them with civil rights. Such subjects are perfectly well suited to the kingdoms of this world, and to the character of *their* sovereigns. For, considered as men, kings and subjects are on a level: and, as distinguished by political characters, their obligations are mutual; allegiance on the one part, and protection on the other.—Besides, temporal kingdoms respect the present world. The mutual duties of sovereigns and the subjects, as such, regard the happiness of civil society, and of that only. As an investiture with political sovereignty, does not constitute a lord of conscience, it gives no claim to authority in spiritual things, but is entirely confined to the concerns of this world. It is, indeed, the indispensable duty of secular princes, and of their people, to love and adore God. yet that obligation does not arise from any political relation subsisting among them, but

from their being reasonable creatures. It is also their happiness to be the subjects of Jesus Christ : but that felicity does not result from anything short of divine mercy exercised upon them, as depraved and guilty creatures.

The kingdom and claims of Christ being very different from those of Cæsar, the qualifications and obedience of his real subjects must be so too. For persons may be good subjects of a temporal sovereign, and enjoy the rights of such a character, while they are so far from bearing true allegiance to Jesus Christ, as to be quite inimical to his dominion, and entire strangers to the privileges of his kingdom. The empire of Christ *is not of this world* : it is not a temporal, but a spiritual kingdom. Our Lord, therefore, is a spiritual sovereign ; whose dominion extends to the mind, conscience, and heart, no less than to the external behaviour. Consequently, all the subjects of his government must have spiritual dispositions, and yield spiritual obedience——obedience, proceeding from an enlightened understanding, an awakened conscience, and a renewed heart. For as is the sovereign, such are the subjects, and such the allegiance required. A spiritual Sovereign, and subjects yielding an obedience merely external, are manifestly inconsistent.

As all mankind are born in a state of apostasy from God : as the natural turn of the heart, or *the carnal mind, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be* ; we must be born again——*born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of*

the will of man, but of God, before we are permitted to consider ourselves, or to be considered by others, as the subjects of Him whose kingdom is of a spiritual kind. Remarkable are the words of our Lord, when speaking of his loyal subjects : *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*. No : they are described by the Apostles, as being *of the truth*; *of faith*; and *of God**. *Of the truth* : enlightened, converted, and sanctified by the gospel *Of faith* : living by it; deriving peace and holiness from Jesus Christ through believing in him. *Of God* : born of him ; or *begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*.—Such are the subjects of our Lord's kingdom : in opposition to whom, the New Testament represents the rest of our apostate race, as being *of the works of the law* ; *of the world* ; *of darkness* ; and *of the devil**. *Of the works of the law* ; seeking acceptance with God by their own imperfect obedience, which leaves them under a curse. *Of the world* : carnally minded, and in a state of enmity to God. *Of darkness* : ignorant of their perishing state, and unacquainted with Jesus Christ. *Of the devil* : partakers of his image, subjects of his dominion and performers of his will†. So great is the contrast formed by Scripture, between those who are under our Lord's govern-

* John xviii. 17. Gal iii. 7, 9. 1, Joh iv. 4, 6.

* Gal. iii 10 Joh viii 23 1 Joh. iv 5. 1 Thes. v 5 Joh viii. 38. 41. 44. 1 Jon. iii. 8 12 † Rom. viii. 6 7. 8. Eph. v 8. Joh. viii. 44, Eph. ii. 2.

ment and the rest of mankind ! Agreeably to which, real Christians are further described, as *delivered from the power of darkness*, or the tyranny of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son : and as *being of God*, while all the rest of the *world lies in wickedness*. None, therefore, but those who are born from above, are the subjects of Jesus Christ : for if the heart be not under his dominion, he reigns not at all as a spiritual monarch.

That none but real christians are subjects of our Lord's kingdom, is yet further apparent from the descriptive characters of those that were members of the apostolic churches. We find them described in the New Testament, as *gladly receiving the word of grace as they called of Jesus Christ*, and as *called to be saints*. The Apostles denominate them *brethren*, *faithful brethren*, *holy brethren*, *saints*, and *lively stones* in the spiritual temple*. These and similar characters are frequently applied to the members of the primitive churches in general ; and of those churches the visible kingdom of Christ then consisted. We may therefore say, with VITRINGA ; " The kingdom of grace, in which Christ is king upon mount Zion, is properly and emphatically *the kingdom of Christ* : of which none are subjects, except those who are chosen, called, faithful, peaceable, and humble ; in whom

* Acts ii. 41. Rom. i. 6. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph i. 1. Philip. i. 1 Col. i. 2. 2 Thess. i. 3. Heb. iii. 1. Pe. i. 1. 2. 3. and ii. 5. 2 Pet. i. 1.

“ Jesus Christ lives by his Spirit, as in the
 “ members of a mystical and spiritual body, of
 “ which he is the head*,”

This view of our Lord's subjects is perfectly agreeable to the nature and genius of the new covenant; with which the Messiah's kingdom is closely connected: because it appears, that subjects of any other description, have no reason to consider themselves as covenantees; and it is plain that a divine Covenant must suit the Kingdom to which it belongs, whether Jewish or Christian——When *in the fulness of time*, God performed his gracious and comprehensive promise of blessing all nations, it was by the intervention of a New and better Covenant than that which was made at Sinai. For thus it is written: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS, IN THE DAY THAT I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO BRING THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; which my covenant they brake although I was an husband unto them saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days; saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and e-*

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* Observat. Sac. L. V. C. iv. † 8. See Dr. Estlin's Theolog. Dissertat. p. 111——115.

very man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

This admirably gracious Covenant is completely suited to a spiritual kingdom, and to the subjects we have been describing; for it announces no designs, makes no provisions, confers no blessings, but those that are spiritual, internal, and everlasting. The true knowledge of Jehovah, writing his law in the heart, forgiveness of all sin and perpetual relation to God, are the blessings for which it engages: but there is not a word respecting *temporal* blessings, nor concerning any merely *external relation* to the Great Supreme though these were *the grand articles* in the Covenant made at Horeb. Covenantees, therefore, under the Christian Oeconomy, can be no other than the spiritual seed of Abraham: and such are the subjects of this kingdom. Hence the Gospel Covenant is called *new*, and is expressly opposed to the Sinai Confederation, from which it is extremely different. It is also pronounced *a better* Covenant than that which Jehovah made with the ancient Israel: and so it is, whether we consider its objects, its blessings, its confirmation, or its continuance. Its *objects*: for they are the spiritual seed of Abraham, gathered out of all nations. Its *blessings*: for they are all spiritual and *internal*. Its *confirmation*: for it was ratified by *the death* of Christ. Its *continuance*: for it is *an everlasting* Covenant, ordered in all things and

sure. Yes, it is as much better than the Covenant made at Sinai, as being the children of God by regeneration, is preferable to carnal descent from Abraham--- as the number of God's elect in all nations, exceeds that of the chosen tribes---as blessings entirely spiritual and immortal, are more excellent than those of an earthly kind and of short duration---as redemption from spiritual bondage and eternal ruin, is greater and nobler than deliverance from temporal slavery---as the ratification of this Covenant, by the blood of Immanuel, is more sacred than that which the Old Covenant recieved by the slaughter of brute animals---as the Son of God, the Mediator of it, is greater than Moses, who appeared under that character at Horeb--- and as a Covenant of everlasting efficacy, that secures the final happiness of all to whom it relates, is better than one of a temporary nature, which was violated by the covenantees, and is become forever obsolete. Hence we read, not only of a better *testament*, but also of better *promises*, on which the New Covenant is established; of a better *hope*, introduced by it; of better *sacrifices*, by which guilt is expiated; of better *things* provided for the Christian, than were enjoyed by the Jewish church; and of a better *country* for an inheritance*, than the earthly Canaan. Nay we are assured by an inspired writer, that the Sinai Covenant and the Mosaic Dispensation had no glory attending them, compared with that of the

* Heb. viii. 6. vii. 19. ix. 23. ix. 17. 40.

New Covenant and of the Messiah's Oeconomy* Now, to this more glorious Covenant, the kingdom of Christ, and the subjects of it, must agree. As, therefore, none but spiritual blessings are contained in that Covenant; so none but real saints are the subjects of our Lord's dominion.

Very different, then, is the kingdom of Christ from the ancient *Israelitish Theocracy*. For, of that Theocracy, all Abraham's natural descendants were true subjects and properly qualified members of the Jewish church; such only excepted, as had not been circumcised according to the order of God, or were guilty of some capital crime. To be an obedient subject of their civil government, and a complete member in their ecclesiastical state, were manifestly the same thing; because, by treating Jehovah as their political sovereign, they avowed him as the true God, and were entitled to all the emoluments of their National Covenant. Under that Oeconomy, Jehovah acknowledged all those for *his people*, and himself as *their God*, who performed an external obedience to his commands, even tho' in their hearts disaffected to him*. These prerogatives were enjoyed, independant of sanctifying grace, and of any pretention to it, either in themselves, or in their parents.

The state of things, however, under the New Oeconomy, is extremely different. For the

* 2 Cor. iii. 7—11.

* Judges viii. 23. 1 Sam. viii. 6. 7. and xii. 13.

Chron. xxviii. 5. xxix. 23. 2 Chron. ix 8.

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great proprietor and Lord of the Christian church, having absolutely disclaimed a kingdom that is *of this world*, cannot acknowledge any as the subjects of his government, who do not know or revere him--who do not confide in him, and sincerely love him. Having entirely laid aside those ensigns of political sovereignty, and those marks of external grandeur, which made such a splendid appearance in the Jewish Theocracy; he disdains to be called *the King*, or *the God*, of any person who does not obey and *worship him in spirit and in truth*. Appearing as the head of his church, merely under the character of a spiritual monarch, over whomsoever he reigns, it is in the understanding, by the light of his truth; in the conscience by the force of his authority; and in the heart, by the influence of his love: for as to all others, his dominion is that of Providence, not that of grace.---The New Testament affords no more ground for concluding, that our being descended from parents of a certain description, constitutes us the subjects of our Lord's kingdom; than it does to suppose, that carnal descent, in a particular line of ancestry, confers a claim to the character and work of ministers in the same kingdom.

It is of great importance to the right interpretation of many passages in the Old Testament, that this particular be well understood and kept in view. Jehovah is frequently represented as the Lord and God of all the ancient Israelites; even where it is manifest that multitudes of them were considered as destitute of

internal piety, and many of them as enormously wicked. How, then, could he be called *their* Lord and their God, in distinction from his relation to Gentiles, (whose creator, benefactor, and sovereign he was) except on the ground of the Sinai Covenant? He was *their* Lord, as being the sovereign whom, by a federal transaction, they were bound to obey, in opposition to every political monarch, who should at any time presume to govern them by laws of his own. He was *their* God, as the only object of holy worship; and whom, by the same National Covenant, they had solemnly engaged to serve according to his own rule, in opposition to every Pagan idol. But that National relation between Jehovah and Israel being long since dissolved, and the Jew having no prerogative above the Gentile; the nature of the Gospel Economy, and the Messiah's kingdom, absolutely forbids our supposing, that either Jews or Gentiles are warranted to call the Great Supreme *their* Lord, or *their* God, if they do not yield willing obedience to him, and perform spiritual worship. It is, therefore, either for want of understanding, or of considering the nature, aspect, and influence of the Sinai Constitution, that many dream of the New Covenant, in great numbers of places, where Moses and the Prophets had no thought about it; but had the convention at Horeb directly in view. It is owing to the same ignorance, or inadvertancy; that others argue from various passages in the Old Testament, for justification before God by

their own obedience, and against the final perseverance of real saints. Because, to be entitled to national happiness, by performing the conditions of the Sinai Covenant, and to lose that right by backsliding into profligacy of manners; are very different things, from obtaining justification before God, and forfeiting an interest in the great Redeemer-- so different, that there is no arguing from the one to the other.

Again: As none but real Christians are the subjects of our Lord's kingdom, neither adults, nor infants, can be members of the Gospel Church, in virtue of an *external* covenant, or of a *relative* holiness. A striking disparity this, between the Jewish and the Christian church. Of this difference we may be assured by considering, that a barely relative sanctity, supposes its possessors to be the people of God in a merely external sense: that such an external people, supposes an external covenant, or one that relates to exterior conduct and temporal blessings: and an external covenant supposes an external king. Now an external king, is a political sovereign; but such is not our Lord Jesus Christ, nor yet the divine Father. Once, indeed, it was otherwise: for, concerning the Israelitish nation, it is thus written; *I Jehovah, will be thy king. Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. Jehovah shall rule over you. Jehovah your God was your king*† It was the peculiar honor and happiness of Israel.

† Hosea xiii. 10. Judges viii. 23 & Sam. xii. 12.

el, to have a Sovereign who was the only ob-
 ject of their worship. For thus the Psalmist sings
*Blessed is the nation, whose (king) Jehovah is
 God** ! Hence Jehovah's complaint ; *They
 rejected me, that I should not reign over them*
 Yes, Jehovah, as a temporal monarch, stood
 related to the ancient Israelites, and entered
 into a federal transaction with them at Sinai, not
 only as the object of their worship, but as their
 King. Their judicial and civil institutes, their
 laws of war and of peace, various orders respec-
 ting the land they occupied, and the annual
 acknowledgments to the great proprietor of
 the land were all from God, as their political Sovereign.
 Hence all the natural posterity of Abraham were
 Jehovah's people, on the ground of an external
 covenant made with the whole nation.

The children of Israel, being distinguished
 from the Gentile world, by a system of cere-
 monial precepts, and their divine Sovereign
 residing among them, were denominated a
nation : for that external sanctity which they
 possessed, seems to have arisen, partly from
 their *National Covenant*, and partly from their
 having *the Divine Presence* among them. By the
 former, they renounced idolatry in all its forms
 and gave themselves up to Jehovah in opposition
 to the false objects of Pagan worship ; wh

*Ps. xxxiii. 12. and cxliv. 15. *Heb.* See the Septuagint
 Version. and that of JUNIUS and TREMELLII
 together with FOLI *Synops.* VENEMÆ *Comment* in l

separation to the service of God, is denominated *holiness*. By the latter, they had a kind of local nearness to God, which conferred a relative sanctity ; as appears by various instances. When, for example, Moses with astonishment beheld the burning bush, the ground on which he stood was pronounced *holy*, because, of Jehovah's peculiar presence there. Thus it was in the case of Joshua : and so in regard to the place of our Lord's transfiguration ; for Peter calls it *the Holy mount**. And why was part of the ancient sanctuary called *the most holy place*? but because Jehovah in a singular manner, and under a visible emblem, dwelt there. Hence it is manifest, that the Divine Presence, whether under the form of an *angust personage*, as in the case of Joshua ; or under the emblem of *devouring fire*, as in the bush, and upon mount Sinai† ; or under the milder appearance of *a luminous cloud*, as over the mercy seat, and at our Lord's transfiguration, confers a relative holiness. It is also equally plain, that this miraculous presence of God being withdrawn from the several places to which we have just adverted, they have now no more holiness than any other part of the earth.

So the Israelites, being separated from all other nations for the worship of Jehovah as their God, to the exclusion of all idolatry ; avowing subjection to him as their king, in contradistinction to all other sovereigns ; and he residing a

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* Exod. iii. 5. Josh. v. 15. 2 Pet. i. 18.

† Exod. xix. 18.

mong them in the sanctuary, as in his royal palace; there was a relative holiness attending their persons, and almost every thing pertaining to them. For not only Jehovah's royal pavilion, with all its utensils and services; the ministers of that sanctuary and their several vestments; but the people in general, the metropolis of their country, the houses of individuals the land, cultivated by them, and the produce of that land, were all styled *holy**.—The Divine Presence residing among them, appears to have had an extensive influence upon the people, with regard to relative sanctity and external purity. So in cases of corporal pollution by disease, the patients were to be excluded from the common intercourse of society, that they might not defile the camp in the midst of which their sublime Sovereign dwelt†. Nay, divine law expressly required, that even the surface of the ground on which they trod should be preserved from one speices of defilement; and the injunction is enforced by this consideration, *For Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of the camp*‡.

Remarkably to our purpose is the declaration of God, when speaking of the ancient sanctuary; *There I will meet with the children of Israel, and Israel (not the tabernacle) shall be sanctified by my*

* See Exod xxviii. 2, 4. xxix. 1. Lev xix. 23. 24. xx. 26 xxv. 2, 4. xxvii. 14, 30. Numb. xvi. 3. 38. xxxv. 34. Deut. vii. 6. † Numb. v. 2, 3. and xxxv. 34. ‡ Deut. xxiii. 12, 13, 14.

*glory**. For, as VENEMA observes, "neither the *tabernacle* nor the *altar*, is to be understood; but the *Israelites themselves*, as appears by the connection and series of the discourse. Because, in the immediately following verse, the sanctification of the tabernacle, and of the altar, is expressly mentioned. Besides, it is plain that the external symbol of Jehovah's presence was a sufficient indication of God's *glory* in the tabernacle. Thus the holiness of the people, equally as that of places, was derived from the external presence of God†."—Now, as the Divine Presence had a local, visible residence over the mercy-seat, which was the throne of Jehovah; as that Presence among the Israelites had such an extensive operation upon their state, both in respect of privilege and of duty; as the whole nation was a typical people, and a great part of their worship of a shadowy nature; we need not wonder, that in such an ecclesiastico-political kingdom almost every thing should be esteemed, in a relative sense, *holy*.

Under the Gospel Dispensation, however, these peculiarities have no existence. For Christ has not made an external covenant with any people. He is not the king of any particular nation. He dwells not in a palace made with hands. His throne is in the heavenly sanctuary; nor does he afford his visible presence in

* Exod. xxix, 43. Vid. JUNIUM and TAYMELL. in loc.

† Dissertat. Sac. L. ii. C. iii § 6.

any place upon earth. The partition wall between Jews and Gentiles has long been demolished : and, consequently, our divine Sovereign does not stand related to any people, or to any person, so as to confer a relative sanctity, or to produce an external holiness.

While the Sinai Covenant continued in force, the Son of God was the King of the Jews : for though, by Saul and others bearing the regal character, the Divine government was obscured, yet it was not abolished. The kingdom of Israel in the hands of the Sons of David, being denominated *the kingdom of Jehovah* ; the throne on which Solomon sat being called *the throne of Jehovah** ; and the laws of the state being still divine, we are led to view the Jewish kings as the *vicegerents* of Jehovah†. ---in this light the queen of Sheba considered Solomon when she said ; *Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on HIS THRONE, to be king FOR THE LORD THY GOD* ||. Of the Jewish magistrates it is also written, *Ye judge not for man, but for Jehovah** Now so long as a political relation subsisted between the Son of God and the seed of Abraham, an external holiness continued, as resulting from that relation. But though this foundation of relative sanctity was

* 2 Chron. xiii. 8. 1 Chron. xxiii. 5. and xxix. 23

† Vid. WITSII miscell. Sac. Tom. II. p. 920, 936. VENEMAE. Hist. Eccl. Vet. Test. Tom. I.

// 198. Dissertat, Sac. L. II. C. iv. * 2. Chron. ix. 8

not removed till the death of Christ, there is no intimation in the Evangelical History of any one being entitled to a New Testament rite, or to the character of a subject in the messiah's kingdom, in virtue of that holiness. Nay, the reverse appears in the conduct of John toward the Jews*.

The Covenant made at Horeb having long been obsolete, all its peculiarities are vanished away : among which, relative sanctity made a conspicuous figure. That national constitution being abolished, Jehovah's political sovereignty is at an end. The covenant therefore now in force, and the royal relation of our Lord to the church, are entirely spiritual. All that external holiness of persons, of places & of things, which existed under the Old Oeconomy, is gone forever : so that if the professors of christianity do not possess a real, internal sanctity, they have none at all. --- The national confederation at Sinai is expressly contrasted, in holy Scripture, with the New Covenant* : and though the latter manifestly provides for internal holiness, respecting all the covenantees, yet it says not a word about relative sanctity. And, indeed, how should it? since, by its commencement, the whole Sinai Constitution became obsolete ; the partition wall was broken down ; the special relation between God and Abraham's natural seed ceased, and left no difference of a religious

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* 2 Chron. xix. 6. Matt. iii. 7—12.

* Jer. xxxi. 31—34. Heb. viii. 7—13.

kind between Jews and Gentiles---no difference, in respect of nearness to God and communion with him, except that which regeneration and faith in Christ produce. For, under the present Dispensation, *Christ is all in all*. We may therefore safely conclude, that were the Jews converted and re-settled in Palestine, both they and their infant offspring would be as entirely destitute of the ancient relative holiness, as those Mahomedans are who now reside in that country.

But did an external holiness now exist, we should be obliged to consider it as very different from that of the ancient Israelites; for it appears, by what has been said, that the grounds of their exterior sanctity make no part of the Christian Oeconomy. Besides, their holiness extended to the whole nation: but in what Utopia shall we find all the inhabitants possessed of this relative purity? Theirs continued as long as they lived; except they committed some enormous crime, by which they forfeited their lives, or were cast out of the congregation. For it did not wear out by age, nor was it lost merely by continuing in a state of unregeneracy. Whereas, that external holiness for which so many plead, is not generally considered by them as extending beyond the time of infancy.--But why should any contend for the *relative holiness* of infants, who deny a sanctity of *that kind*, to places of worship, clerical habits, and various other things? for it is plain that *the Jewish external purity*, whether of persons

of places, or of things, originated in the same National Covenant, and in the same relation of God to Israel; and consequently, must have the same duration in one case, as in another. We may therefore justly conclude, that the federal and relative holiness of which so many speak, neither agrees with the laws of Judaism, nor with the nature of Christianity. But if so, it cannot belong to the kingdom of Christ.

Further: If all the subjects of Christ be real saints, it may be justly queried whether any *National religious establishment* can be a part of his kingdom. That multitudes of individuals belonging to such establishments are subjects of the King-messiah, is cheerfully granted: but is it not plain, that a National church is inimical to the spirit of our Lord's declaration. *My kingdom is not of this world?* Does not that comprehensive and important saying compel us to view the church and the world in a *contrasted* point of light? And does not the idea of a National church lead us to *confound* them? Does it not manifestly confound *the church of the first born, which are written in heaven; with the world, that lies in wickedness*, whose names are entered in parish registers*?—The subjects of our Lord's

* It has been well observed by a sensible writer that when Jesus told Pilate "the sole end of his kingdom" and of his coming into the world, was *truth* and the "propagation of it; Pilate says, *What is truth?* He "knew very well that *truth* had little or nothing to do "with the maxims of worldly policy: that he, that is "Jesus, was not at all likely to be a competitor with

kingdom are born of God, are called out of world; but natural birth and local circumstances are considered, either as giving membership, or as entitling to a positive rite which confers membership, in a National church.

Church of England, for instance, includes English subjects of the British crown, whether they be moral or profligate, pious or profane, such only excepted, as have not been baptized or as lie under a sentence of excommunication. Nay, so tenacious is the English Church of this idea, as to consider numbers within its pale who never considered themselves in that light. For, in certain cases, well known to the doctor of Canon Law, Protestant Dissenters, and even Popish recusants, are cast out of its communion—*cast out*, with dreadful penalties annexed tho they never acknowledged themselves to be *in*!

The Church of England, indeed, is manifestly a secular kingdom. For it is established by human laws, and acknowledges a political head: nor is it esteemed material whether that head be male or female. It is a creature of the state; supported by the state, incorporated with

“ Cæsar: that a *kingdom of truth* could not interfere with the claims of his master: that it was trifling to accuse him as an enemy to Cæsar. But then, Jesus said that he was setting upon a kingdom: that he claimed an alliance with the state, and which *tended to a supremacy*, Pilate would have had *no objection* of to accuse him “ *Comment on Bp, WARRINGTON’S Alliance between Church and state*, p 9.

the state, and governed by a code of laws confirmed by the state---a code, very different from the sacred canons of the New Testament; those being quite foreign to its constitution. Its principal officers are appointed by the crown; and, in virtue of ecclesiastical station, are lords of Parliament*. Nay, even the doctrines

* That our first Reformers did not approve of secular grandeur, power, and employments, being annexed to the character of bishops, is very apparent. Thus Mr. TYNDAL, for instance; "Is it not a shame above all shames, and a monstrous thing that no man should be found able to govern a worldly kingdom, save bishops and prelates, that are taken out of the world, and appointed to preach the kingdom of God? To preach God's word is too much for half a man; and to minister a temporal kingdom is too much for half a man also. Either other requireth a whole man. One therefore cannot well do both—Wherefore if Christ's kingdom be *not of this world*, nor any of his disciples may be otherwise than he was, then Christ's vicars, which minister his kingdom in his bodily absence, and have the oversight of his flock, may be none emperors, kings, dukes, lords, knights, temporal judges, or any other temporal officer; or under any false names have any such dominion, or minister any such office, as requireth violence.,, Thus Bp. LATIMER, in his sermon of the *Plough*: "This much I dare say, that since *lording* and *loitering* hath come up, preaching hath come down, contrary to the Apostles times. For they preached and *lorded* not: and now they *lord*, and preach not—Ever since that prelates were made *lords* and nobles, the plough standeth, there is no work done, the people starve—They are otherwise occupied [than in preaching:] some, in king-

professed, and the worship performed in that establishment, are all secularized. Its creeds and forms of prayer, its numerous rubrics and various rites, are adopted and used under the sanction of civil authority. Its Liturgy, therefore may be justly considered as an *Act of Parliament* respecting religious affairs. It must therefore be considered as a *ken kom of this wor*

The tenor of the New Testament, however, agreeably to our Lord's maxim, leads us to consider particular churches as Congregational, as consisting of those who make a credible profession of repentance and faith. Such congregations, wherever they be, constitute the visi-

" matters ; some are ambassadors ; some, of the
 " vy council : some, to furnish the court ; some,
 " lords of the parliament ; some are presidents,
 " comptrollers of mints. Well, well is this their
 " ty ? Is this their office ? Is this their calling
 " Should we have ministers of the church compt-
 " lers of the mints ? Is this a meet office for a pri-
 " that hath care of souls ? Is this his charge ? I w^d
 " here ask one question. I would fain know
 " comtrolleth the devil at home in his parish, wh^o
 " he comtrolleth the mint ? If the Apostles might
 " leave the office of preaching to be deacons, shall
 " leave it for minting ?" Thus Bp Hooper
 " Our bishops have so much wit, they can rule
 " serve, as they say, in both states : in the chur-
 " and also in the civil policy. When one of them
 " more than any man is able to satisfy, let him
 " always his best diligence—They know that the
 " mitive church had no such bishops as be now
 " days." In Mr PIERCE'S *Vindicat. of Dissent.* I
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kingdom of Christ.—That the apostolic churches were Congregational, is clear from the sacred Records; and that there was no National church for the first three hundred years, is equally evident. Because there could not be any such establishment, till the civil government of some nation or other professed christianity; which was not the case before CONSTANTINE ascended the Imperial throne. Then, indeed a kind of political Christianity came into fashion, which has continued ever since, and yet in great repute. Nor are National churches likely to fail, while the policy of sovereign princes, and the pride of aspiring prelates can support them. But, being established by human laws, and each of them acknowledging a visible head, either civil or ecclesiastical, either prince or pontiff; they are secular kingdoms, and unworthy the name of Christian churches.

Once more: As none but regenerate persons belong to the kingdom of christ, no one is a better subject of his dominion, or a more honorable member of his church, on account of *wealth* or *power*, of *parts* or *learning*. These things, though useful in their places, of much reputation to a secular empire, and of great consequence to it; neither pertain to the true glory of a Christian church, nor to the sterling worth of a Christian character. For what concern have worldly wealth and civil power, in forming a spiritual character, or in adorning a spiritual kingdom? The greatest affluence and the highest authority that mortals can enjoy, add nothing to any one's

moral worth. No one is a better man, because he is rich and powerful ; nor the worse, because he is poor and in a low station. These things are all exterior to moral character. The most licentious are often exalted and wealthy, while the most upright and amiable are in obscurity and oppressed with want. Besides when wealth, or power, is possessed by a true subject of our Lord's kingdom, the honor attending his character does not arise from his riches, his authority ; but from the holiness of his life or his likeness to Jesus Christ.

As our British Sovereign is the fountain of honor to all his subjects, even so is the King Messiah to all that are under his dominion. The only way however to be great and honorable in his kingdom is to be humble, diligent, and useful, in promoting the happiness of our fellow Christians and fellow creatures. For among the fundamental laws of Messiah's empire, the following is one, and it relates to comparative honor : *Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many**. This illustrating the law of honor, and the rule of promotion in the kingdom of Christ, we may safely conclude, that the meanest domestic may be a dignified character in a gospel church, and *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour* while his wealth

*Matt. xx. 26, 27. Mark. x. 42—45.

and powerful master, professing the same faith, may disgrace the name of a christian, and bring reproach on the congregation to which he belongs. If the former be diligent and faithful in his menial station : if he be *found in the faith*, zealous for God, and heavenly minded ; he is an honorable subject of Jesus Christ, and high in the estimation of Heaven. If, on the contrary, the latter be formal in his religious profession ; if he be unjust or haughty, voluptuous or covetous ; he does not belong to the kingdom of Christ, but is manifestly a subject of Satan.

Nor do the most shining mental accomplishments, or literary acquisitions, enter into the true glory of this kingdom. Genius and learning, like wealth and power, are frequently possessed by the worst of moral characters. They cannot, therefore, make any part of that excellence by which the subjects of Jesus Christ are distinguished from those secular princes. It is not by the gifts of common Providence, among which parts and learning make a conspicuous figure ; but by the graces of the Holy Spirit, that any person, as a Christian, is worthy of regard.—Yes, it is faith in Christ, and obedience to him ; love to God, and benevolence to man ; humility, patience, and resignation ; spirituality, and heavenly mindedness, which adorn the subjects of our Lord's kingdom—which distinguish them from the children of this world. These, and similar things, respect the state of the conscience, and of the heart. They form a character for eternity,

and favour of the heavenly world. Whereas, learning and parts, equally as wealth and power, are quite of a different nature. The distinction they make between one another is entirely superficial, and often disgraced by a profligate heart—belongs only to this world, and has no connection with heaven. But, as will appear in its proper place, the kingdom of Christ is nearly allied to heaven---is a state of preparation for that sublime blessedness, an introduction to its employments, and gives an earnest of its fruitions. Consequently, the true glory of that kingdom cannot but consist, in the lively exercise of holy tempers and heavenly affections. The more there is of a likeness to heaven, in the heart and life of any Christian; the more there is of that *honor which comes from God*, and the more is the cause of Christ adorned.—To be a real subject of this kingdom, is a much greater honor than merely to be a Prophet, or an Apostle, For Balaam was the former, and Judas was the latter; yet both of them were base and wretched. *Rejoice not that the devils are subject to you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,—and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity; I am nothing, in the estimate of a Spiritual Sovereign, or in reference to the heavenly state.*

No minister of the word, therefore, when performing his public work, should ever think of exalting himself as an officer in this kingdom, by

displaying his learning, his genius or his eloquence; for that would be to *preach himself, not Christ Jesus the Lord*: but, as *in the sight of God*, he should honestly aim at *commending himself to every man's conscience, by manifestation of the truth*. Then will he imitate a first rate minister in the Messiah's kingdom, and obtain the approbation of his divine Sovereign.---Besides, in the displays of profound learning, by critical disquisitions; of great acumen, by metaphysical speculations; or of a sparkling genius, by agreeable turns of wit, Christ and conscience feel their interests but little concerned. The former is too observant of the preacher's motives, and too jealous of his own honor, to be pleased with such a procedure; and the latter is too sleepy to be aroused, or too much pained to receive relief, by those means. If our Lord consider himself as honored by the preacher's labours, and if the minister have any reason to expect success, it must be by a faithful and simple promulgation of revealed truths---those truths which regard supreme authority in the divine law, and saving grace in the glorious gospel---those truths, I will add, which lie open to common capacities. If the conscience receive advantage, it is by the operation of the same truths; either as convincing of sin and enforcing duty, or as revealing pardon and affording peace. But the honor of Christ and the tranquility of conscience are seldom promoted, in a public ministry, by the researches of learning, or the refinements of genius: for they are too sacred, and too spiritual,

to acknowledge their obligations to such things.

The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, with regard to the means be employed in its first establishment, and those be appointed for its enlargement and support. Craft and violence, injustice and cruelty, have been commonly used in the founding, supporting, and extending of secular kingdoms. The Roman empire was founded, and grew to its height, in blood. Even the Jewish republic was established, enlarged, and defended by force of arms. The Canaanitish nations, on account of their enormous wickedness, were exterminated by the sword of Israel; or, if spared by the chosen tribes, became tributary to them. This, though according to Jehovah's appointment, as the great proprietor of the whole earth; and though a righteous execution of punishment, for acts of rebellion against the Eternal Sovereign; was a plain indication that, in various respects, the Israelitish church was a kingdom of this world. Such also was that kingdom of the Messiah which the carnal Jews in our Lord's time vainly expected, whenever the great promise made to their fathers should be fulfilled: for they dreamed of being exalted to the highest pitch of political grandeur, and of having all the other nations under their control.---The principal instruments employed by princes, to establish, maintain, and extend their dominions, are--not persons the most remarkable for integrity and benevolence, for piety and philanthropy; but *those who are most eminent for political prudence or martial bravery; for secret intrigue, or open*

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hostility--those who are best qualified to persuade by eloquence, to circumvent by cunning, or to subdue by force.

But the most illustrious instruments employed by our Anointed Prince in the erecting of his monarchy, were of a character quite the reverse. They were chiefly selected from the lower orders of life, and called from occupations esteemed mean. Uneducated in the courts of royalty, in the schools of learning, or in the field of war; they were strangers to the finesse of politicians, little acquainted with Gentile philosophy, and unpractised in the art of eloquence. It may be justly presumed, therefore, that a strong degree of rusticity appeared in their dress, their aspect, and their accent: for they were apparently *unlearned and unpolished men*. So ignorant were they of sciences called liberal, so impolite in their address, and so uncanonical in their garb, that multitudes called christians, it is highly probable, would be ashamed to give them a hearing, were they now present among us; unless the public attention were first excited, by the exercise of their miraculous powers.---Yes, by the instrumentality of those unlettered and plain men did our Lord erect his kingdom, or establish the gospel church. In making war upon Satan's empire, evangelical truth and spiritual gifts, laborious preaching and ardent prayer, fortitude, patience, and holy example, were the arms they used. Such were the militia, and such *the armour*, employed by our divine Sovereign:

yet perfectly suited to the nature of his kingdom. For it is an empire, not of secular power and external pomp; but of truth and of righteousness, of love and of peace.

Were the Messiah's kingdom *of this world*; his loyal subjects might lawfully take the sword, to repel assailants and subdue his enemies; for without the liberty of such defence, no secular state can long subsist. This, however, he absolutely prohibited: which prohibition is founded in the peculiar nature of his kingdom. For thus he speaks, to one who thought of defending his person and cause by force; *Put up thy sword into the sheath.* Soon after, on another occasion he, said; *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence*.* As by the particle *now*, our spiritual Sovereign apparently refers to his kingdom among the Jews; so he seems to distinguish his dominion in the gospel church, from that over the Israelitish nation.

In former times, the Holy Spirit frequently came upon the subjects of Jehovah's government to inspire them with martial courage for the defence of his kingdom, and to destroy his enemies. Hence, among the ancient worthies, we read of those who *subdued kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens.* But the disciples of Christ being called to a different kind of conflict, divine energy is granted for a diffe-

* Joh xviii. 11, 36.

rent purpose. The military service of a Christian, as such, is entirely of a spiritual nature. It is a *good fight of faith*: a *striving against sin*, in himself, and in the world around him: a *bolding fast the profession of his faith*, in spite of all opposition. The Christian hero is conformed to the captain of salvation, in maintaining the truth, and in bearing the cross; in enduring the contradiction of sinners, and in despising the shame that is cast upon him. His accoutrements are, as Paul informs us, *The girdle of truth, and the breastplate of righteousness; the shield of faith, and helmet of hope, and the sword of the Spirit**. Such is the armour provided by the King Messiah for his devoted subjects; by which they are enabled to defend themselves, and to promote the general interests of his kingdom. This holy empire depends not upon power, wealth, or learning, either for ornament or support. *Nor by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah.*

Neither the force of *secular power*, nor the arts of *carnal policy*, ought therefore to be used in promoting the cause of Christ: such things being quite abhorrent from his intention, and from the nature of his kingdom. The great design of our Lord in founding a Spiritual empire was, to display the perfections of God in the holiness and happiness of his chosen people. The kingdom of Christ, as before observed, is a dominion of truth and of rectitude, of love and of

* Eph. vi. 10—18. 1 Theff. v. 8. 2 Cor. x 3, 4, 5.

peace. Now the interests of such a monarchy, and the end proposed by it, cannot be promoted by any other than spiritual means, and those of divine appointment. It is only so far as the minds of men are enlightened by heavenly truth, their consciences impressed with God's authority, and their hearts engaged on spiritual things, that the cause of Christ is advanced. But in what way shall persecuting force be applied, to irradiate the dark understanding, to arouse the stupid conscience, and to sanctify the depraved heart? It is only by the fruits of an adoring affection for God, of sincere love to the brethren, and of cordial good-will to all mankind, that our Lord is honored, or his end answered, by the subjects of his dominion. How, then, shall coercive measures increase those fruits of holiness? Or how shall malevolence, in any of its infernal forms, be employed to support a kingdom of love and of peace,

Nor are the contrivances of *carnal policy* less foreign to the nature of this kingdom, than the exertions of secular power. For what has the policy of princes, or of prelates, to do in maintaining, or in extending, an empire of truth and of rectitude? Truth seeks no subterfuge, and rectitude fears no examination: but the operations of policy are subtil, and its first designs are latent. The policy of great men may form civil establishments of Christianity, and adorn the exterior of public worship. It may dignify ministers of the word with pompous titles, unknown to the New Testament, and invest them with

temporal power, till their claims of succeeding to the Apostles becomes an insult upon common sense. These and similar things may be effected by it, under the fair pretext of rendering religion respectable, and of making it more general: but the empire of Jesus Christ disdains them all, because they belong to the kingdoms of this world.

But though our Lord neither needs, nor accepts, the puny arts of men, to advance his cause and support his interests; yet various methods have been devised by ecclesiastics, to obviate *the offence of the cross*, to render themselves respectable, and to promote something called *Christianity*. That they might not be thought, like the Fishermen of Galilee, *unlearned and ignorant persons*, they have eagerly sought literary titles, and to be called *Rabi*. To adorn the ministerial office, and to sanction their administrations, they have been as careful as Jewish priests to appear in canonicals. To prevent the pride of their hearers being disgusted, certain humiliating truths have been kept out of sight; and that the consciences of others might not be pained, softening interpretations of divine precepts have been given. To stand free from a suspicion of bigotry, the importance of capital truths has been surrendered; and to keep fair with something called *liberty*, it has been agreed that human inventions should hold the place of divine institutions.—Many of the clerical character, in our National Establishment, have deliberately subscribed to *what they did not believe*; solemnly professed their

consent to what they could not approve; frequently practised, as part of their public duties, what they were constrained to wish never existed*. Nay, as if the ministers of Establishment possessed a righteous monopoly of publishing evangelical truth, and of administering divine institutions, numbers of them sworn to persecute their Protestant Dissenting neighbours, for daring to hold separate abodes†. Thus multitudes have subscribed

*For can any man upon earth really believe a that is contained in the Thirty nine Articles, and dially approve of every thing contained in the of Common Prayer?

† Thus runs part of an oath which is taken by Graduates in the University of Oxford. Item aliter tu jurabis, quod intenuis communitate personas istius Universitatis, impedies pacem, cordiam et amorem—*Nec Conventiculis interesse nec eis tacite vel expresse consentire SED EA OMNIBUS MODIS QUIBUS POTERIS IMPEDIRE. Excerpt from the Status. Universit. Oxon. Tit. IX. Sect. vi § 1* is, You shall in a particular manner swear, that you shall not obstruct peace, harmony & love among any counties, or persons, of this University—Nor ought you to be present in conventicles, nor either expressly nor consent to them BUT RATHER HINDER THEM BY ALL POSSIBLE MEANS IN YOUR POWER—How any man acquainted with the rights of conscience, can take this oath; or, having taken it, can treat Dissenters as Christian brethren, without renouncing his Oath of Conformity, I cannot imagine. A more shocking dilemma can scarcely be conceived: for it is perjury on the one hand and perjury on the other.—A similar complexion is the eleventh Canon of the

sented, trimmed and sworn, to promote the interests of a spiritual kingdom--a kingdom of truth, of love, and of peace !

Some, of different communions, have deliberately acted as if the preacher's work were a mere trial of skill, and as if a pulpit were the stage of a harlequin. To display the fertility of their invention, they have selected for texts mere

England, which is entitled, *Maintainers of controversies censured*, and it reads thus, " Whosoever shall hereafter affirm or maintain, That there are within this realm other meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the King's born subjects, than such as the laws of this land are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful churches : Let him be excommunicated, and not restored, but by the archbishop, after his repentance, and public revocation of such his wicked words."—I will here subjoin the following remark of Dr. OWEN : " There is in this [ecclesiastical], community required a renunciation of all other ways of public worship, or means of edification, that may be made use of. For they are all expressly forbidden in the rule of the Conformity. No man, therefore, can comply with that rule, but that a renunciation of all other public ways of edification as unlawful is part of the visible profession which they make. *des meliora proboque, deteriora, sequor*, is no good maxim in religion. It is uprightness and integrity that will preserve men, and nothing else. He that will endeavour to cheat his conscience by distinctions and mental reservations, in any concerns of religious worship, I fear hath little of it, if any at all that is good for aught. *Enquiry into the Orig. Nature, Titus, and commun. Evang. churches* p. 228, 229.

scraps of scripture language ; which, so far from containing complete propositions, have not, in their dislocated state conveyed a single idea. Upon these they have harangued ; while the ignorant multitude have been greatly surprised that the preacher could find so much, where common capacities perceived nothing.-- Sometimes these men of genius will choose passages of Scripture expressive of plain historical facts, which have no connection with the great work of salvation by Jesus Christ ; and handle them (not professedly by way of accommodation, for then it might be admitted) but as if they were *sacred allegories*. Such historical facts being *spiritualized*, as they love to call it, doctrines, privileges, duties, in abundance, are easily derived from them. Nay, so ingenious are preachers of this turn, that it is no hard matter for them to find a great part of their creed in almost any text they take. Thus they allegorize common sense into pious absurdity.—It might, perhaps, be too barefaced, though it would certainly suit the vanity of such preachers, were they frequently to address their hearers on the pronominal monosyllable *I* : and there are two passages of sacred Writ where it occurs in the most opposite manner. The former would make an admirable text ; the latter, a noble conclusion : and they are as follows : “ Such a man as *I*— Is not this great Babylon that *I* have built* ? Others, and

* Mr. G. GREGORY, when animadverting on the conduct which is here censured, says ; “ It is

often the same persons, frequently use the gestures of the theatre, and the language of a mountebank: as if their business were to amuse, to entertain, and to make their hearers laugh. Extravagant attitudes and quaint expressions, idle stories and similies quite ludicrous, appear in abundance, and constitute no small part of the entertainment furnished by such characters. But in what a state must the consciences of those preachers be, who can deliberately and with premeditation act in this manner! Or, what must we think of their petitions for divine assistance in addressing the people, when they intend thus to treat them!—I called it *entertainment*; and surely, they themselves do not consider it in a religious point of light. For can any man, who

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dangerous on any occasion to depart from the plain track of common sense; and there is no attempt at ingenuity so easy as that which borders upon nonsense—It is one of the mean artifices of barren genius, to surprise the audience with a text consisting of one or two words. I have heard of a person of this description, who preached from *Jehovah Jireh*, and another, from the monosyllable *But*. These are contemptible devices, more adapted to the moving theatre of the mountebank than to the pulpit, and can only serve to captivate the meanest and most ignorant of the vulgar. “*Sermons*, Introd. p. 14, 15, 18.—Mr. CLAUDE says, “Never choose such texts as have not a complete sense; for only impertinent and foolish people will attempt to preach from one or two words which signify nothing.” *Essay on Composition of a Sermon*. Vol. I p. 3.

is not insane deliberately adopt measures of this kind, when really aiming, either to produce or to promote, a devotional and heavenly temper in the hearts of his hearers? Yet that is the general end of preaching. Or can the preacher have any devotion, while showing the airs of a mountebank; and when, if the bulk of his auditory had no more decency than himself, there would be a burst of laughter throughout the assembly? Whatever such declaimers may think, where there is no solemnity, there is no devotion: and we may venture to add, that a person habitually destitute of devotion in his own heart, while pretending to teach others the doctrine of Christ is a wretched character in the sight of God, and has reason to tremble. Such a man serves not our Lord Jesus Christ, but his own interests, in some form or other. He may wish for popularity, and perhaps may obtain it from the ignorant multitude; but people of sense and of piety will consider him as disgracing his office, as affronting their understandings, and as insulting the majesty of that Divine Presence in which he stands. For where upon earth are we to expect solemnity, if not in the pulpit? There a man should be serious and solemn as death.

It may perhaps be said; "This kind of trifling has its use. It is a mean of exciting curiosity, and of drawing many to hear the gospel, who might not otherwise have the least inclination so to do." Such, I presume, is the chief reason by which preachers of this cast endeavour to justify themselves at the bar of their

own consciences. In answer to which, a repetition of that capital saying, *My kingdom is not of this world*, might be sufficient: for that must be a wretched cause, even of a secular kind, which needs buffoonery to support it. To trifle in the service of God, is to be profane. It is, therefore, an impious kind of trifling: and *shall we do evil that good may come?*—Through the interference of Providence, and the sovereign grace of God, various instances of enormous wickedness have issued in the highest good to mankind. Of this we have undoubted evidence in the selling of Joseph by his envious brethren. We have a still more striking instance in the death of Christ, through the treachery of Judas and malice of the Jews. Nay, persecution has frequently been an occasion of spreading the gospel: yet few, I take it for granted, have persecuted for that end, or attempted to justify the practice upon that principle. Were the farcical conduct, here censured, lawful, there would be reason to think that the cause of Christ, and the interests of harlequin, are very nearly allied; because the same kind of means is adapted to promote them.

The Seraphim, however in Isaiah's vision, and the Apostles of Christ, appear to have had a very different view of the case. The former (who seem to be an emblem of apostolic ministers*), are presented to notice, as performing the service of their Sublime Sovereign with profound-

* Vid. *Vitringam in loc.*

est awe. Struck with the majesty of his appearance, and penetrated by the authority of his commands they adore and obey with all humility, and with all solemnity. Agreeably to which, the *latter* give it as divine law, that those who would perform acceptable worship, must do it *with reverence and godly fear*. This law of devotion they further inform us, is founded in the nature of things; as appears by the reason assigned to enforce the precept, *For our God is a CONSUMING FIRE*. Such is the Christian's God, with regard to his purity, his jealousy, and his justice*.

Conformable to this idea of that Sublime Being whom every preacher professes to serve, was the conduct of Paul when dispensing the gospel. For in opposition to some who *handled the word of God deceitfully*, to amuse the carnal and win their affections; he laboured, *by manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God*. Truth, conscience, and God! What sacred and solemn ideas! Yet Paul, as a preacher, habitually acted under their influence. That evangelical truth might be displayed, that the human conscience might be impressed, and that the will of God might be performed, were all included in his design. How foreign are these particulars from every thing of a farcical nature! Nor can any person who considers himself, when preaching the word, as having eternal truth for the subject of his discourse,

* Heb. xii. 28, 29. Deut. iv. 24 ix. 3.

the consciences of men for the objects of his regard, and the omniscient God for a witness of his conduct, be otherwise than solemn: for such an one will speak as knowing that he *must give an account*.—When hearing a minister who acts in character, and copies the example of Paul, we are led to reflect on that ancient oracle; *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me*, to perform sacred service. But when sitting under the effusions of a pulpit buffoon, the language of an Egyptian tyrant occurs to remembrance; *Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?* or what is his worship, that I should treat it with reverence?

When a sermon was expected from Peter, by Cornelius and his friends, the centurion expressed himself thus: *We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*. These Gentiles, it is manifest, were penetrated with devout solemnity, and filled with holy expectation. Not being assembled for carnal amusement, but in order to know and perform the will of God; they considered themselves as in the Divine Presence: and so did their inspired teacher. A worthy example for us to follow, when convened to preach and to hear the word of truth. But how contrary to this is that pulpit drollery, which is the object of our censure! For it converts the solemn service of God (shocking metamorphosis!) into carnal amusement, upon which numbers indeed attend with pleasure, but with no more devotion than if they were in a playhouse.

Is there any reason to be surprised that men of sense, who are already prejudiced against the genuine gospel, should have their disaffection to evangelical truths increased, when they find those truths avowed, and their importance loudly urged, by merry Andrews? If, instead of *sound speech, which cannot be condemned*, they meet with extravagance and nonsense, what will they say? Is there any reason to wonder, that Infidels should thence take occasion to ridicule the Scripture, as calculated to serve the meanest purposes; or that they should contemptuously call preaching *priestcraft*? If those who profess to love revealed truths dress them in a fool's coat, for the entertainment of their hearers, will Deists forbear to laugh? If, where the *man of God* should be heard, with all solemnity warning sinners *to flee from the wrath to come*, and intreating them *to be reconciled to God*; a farcical droll appear, spouting low wit and provoking risibility, will the infidel say; "The preacher himself does not believe the Christian ministry to be a divine appointment, nor the exercise of it a devotional service; but he finds it convenient for secular purposes to make pretences of that kind?"—Among all the devices of carnal policy for the support and enlargement of our Lord's kingdom, there are none more contemptible, and few more detestable, than of converting the pulpit into a stage of entertainment. Of this mind was an old Nonconformist minister, when he said; "Of all preaching in the world I hate that most, which has a tendency

“to make the hearers laugh; or to affect their
 “minds with such levity as stage-plays do in-
 “stead of affecting them with an holy reverence
 “for the name of God. We should suppose, as
 “it were, when we draw near him in holy things,
 “that we saw the throne of God, and the millions
 “of glorious angels attending him; that we
 “may be awed with his majesty, lest we profane
 “his service, and take his name in vain.”——

To the pulpit harlequin we may therefore apply the following lines;

“If angels tremble, ’tis at such a sight:
 “More struck with grief, or wonder, who can tell?”

The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, in regard to the laws by which it is governed. Secular kingdoms are under the direction of human laws, which are frequently weak, partial, and unjust—of laws which, when least imperfect, extend their obliging power no further than the exterior behaviour: for it would be vain and foolish in a temporal sovereign, to think of giving law to the thoughts, or desires, of any subject. Civil penalties are the sanction of human laws, and external force gives them their energy.—Not so the laws of this holy empire. For, proceeding from Him, in whom are all the treasures of knowledge, they must be consummately wise: being enacted by Him who is inflexibly just and supremely kind, they cannot but be perfectly good: being given by him who searches the heart and is Lord of conscience, their ob-

ligation extends to the latent desire, and the rising conception. Controuling the thoughts and binding the conscience, their sanction is entirely spiritual. The motives enforcing obedience to them are the smiles, or the frowns, of Him who has our everlasting all at his disposal.

As is the kingdom, such is the sovereign; and as the sovereign, such are his laws. If the kingdom be *of this world*, it must have a political sovereign; whose laws must be coercive, and confined to exterior behaviour. But if the kingdom be of a spiritual kind, the sovereign must be so too. His laws must extend no less to the conscience, than to the conversation, and be enforced by sanctions of a spiritual nature. Such is the King Messiah, and such are the laws of his kingdom.

The subjects of our divine Sovereign may be considered, either as detached individuals, or as united in distinct societies, and visibly professing their subjection to his authority. Hence the execution of those laws by which they are governed, comes under a twofold consideration. *As detached individuals*, the application of his laws to particular cases, is entirely with him and with the conscience of each individual. *As united in distinct societies*, which are called particular churches, his laws of admission, of worship and of exclusion, are to be applied by the community——applied, not under the influence of carnal motives, but under the operation of his authority, and for purposes entirely spiritual.

By the laws of this kingdom, a credible pro-

profession of repentance and faith is required of all, previous to baptism. Such profession being considered as an evidence of their *fellowship in the gospel*, and of willing subjection to the authority of Christ, they are entitled to membership in a particular church. On this ground they are admitted: nor do they forfeit their membership, except by some capital departure from *that* gospel, or some flagrant offence against *this* authority.—But as, by the laws of our heavenly Sovereign, their admission to visible fellowship was entirely for spiritual purposes, their exclusion from it does not include temporal disadvantages. Their situation as men and as the subjects of a political state, not being altered by their church-relation commencing; they should not be affected, in those respects, by the dissolution of that relation. For as the laws of Christ say nothing about the admission of one or another, on account of his domestic or civil connections; nor yet for his wealth or influence, his parts of learning; so they are equally silent about pecuniary fines and satisfactory penances, about civil disabilities and corporeal punishments attending the exclusion of any offender. The former being quite foreign to qualifications for a spiritual kingdom, the latter must be utterly abhorrent from the laws by which it is governed; being manifestly the inventions of Antichrist, and the supporters of his cruel throne. Civil penalties, in this case, are adapted to generate fear, and promote hypocrisy; to suppress *truth*, and render Christianity itself suspicious.

Hence we perceive another disparity between the Jewish and the Christian church. For under the Old Oeconomy, the laws of religion were sanctified by *temporal politics*, and frequently those of the severest kind*. To be cast out of the congregation, to be forbidden access to the sanctuary worship, (except for ceremonial pollution) was to be deprived, not only of ecclesiastical privileges, but also of civil rights. The church and the state being co-extended, and including the same persons, an exclusion from the former was an expulsion from the latter; whether it was by a sentence of capital punishment, or in some other way. But this, like many other things, was peculiar to that Dispensation. It was founded in the National form of their church-state, and in their Theocracy. Thence it was that blasphemy and idolatry were punished with death, as being high-treason against their divine Sovereign. That Oeconomy being abolished, the church of God has taken a new form. *The priesthood being changed, there is of necessity a change also of the law* relating to the constitution, members and government of the church. The laws of admission, and of exclusion, must therefore be very different; as well as those pertaining to public worship. Now to understand these laws, we must study —not the Pentateuch of Moses; much less

* See Exod. xii. 53, 19. xxx. 33, 38. xxxi. 14. Lev. vii. 20—27. xvii. 3—9. xix. 8. xxiii. 27, 28. 29. Numb. ix. 13. xv. 30, 31. xix. 12. with many other similar places.

the *Provinciale* of LYNDWOOD, or the *Codex* of GIBSON, but — the New Testament of Jesus Christ. To reason from the constitution and form, the laws and government, the privileges and rites of the Jewish, to those the christian church; is to adopt a capital principle of Papal depravity, and grossly to corrupt our holy religion.

Our divine Sovereign has also provided for the edification of his loyal subjects, by ordinances and rites of worship, no less than for the government of his kingdom. As King of the Christian church, it constitutes a distinguished part of his royal prerogative, to prescribe the whole of that spiritual service which is to be performed. Of this prerogative Jehovah was always jealous: nor, under the former Oeconomy, did he ever more instantly, or more severely punish, than when his orders about the affairs of religion were disregarded; even though, as in the case of Uzzah, the motive appeared laudable. — What is religion, in its various branches, but that obedience, which is due to God? And what is obedience, but submission to his authority? Now, as authority exerts itself in commands, there cannot be obedience, there cannot be holy worship, where there is no divine command, either explicit or implicit. *Who hath required this at your hands? In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men* — exclude and condemn a great number of things, which millions esteem ornamental and useful in the worship of God.

Strange, that any Protestant church should avowedly claim a "power to decree rites or ceremonies" in the solemn service of our Lord! As if he were not the legislator in his own kingdom! Or as if, though possessed of authority, he had not wisdom enough to provide for his own honor; or were defective in goodness, respecting his faithful subjects! But whatever the compilers and the subscribers of a National Creed may think, to perform rites which Christ did not appoint, and to alter those which he enjoined, are vile impeachments of his royal character, and must expose to his resentment. The former usurps his throne: the latter annuls his laws.

Strange, did I say? the expression must be recalled. For there is no reason to wonder that a National religious establishment, with a political sovereign for its head, should make the claim I have just mentioned. Who can doubt whether the same authority which constitutes, governs, and supports a community for any particular purpose, may not prescribe to that community with a view to the end intended by it? But things should not be called by wrong names; and to denominate such an establishment a *church of Christ*, is a gross misnomer.

The kingdom of Christ is not like the empires of this world, in regard to external splendor. The grandeur of a temporal kingdom chiefly consists, in the number and affluence of its nobility, the titles and pompous appearance of its various magistrates, the flourishing state of its trade and commerce, the wealth of its peasantry, and

the elegance of its public buildings. Magnificent palaces and royal robes are quite in character for secular princes. Ensigns of honor splendid equipages, and stately mansions, are suitable to the nobles : while a more solemn kind of exterior pomp is very becoming the ministers of public justice. These and similar things give an air of dignity, and of importance, to political sovereignties : but they are all foreign to the kingdom of Christ, the glory of which is entirely spiritual.—The Christian Church is dignified and adorned, by being the depositary of divine truth in its unadulterated state, and by practising divine appointments in their primitive purity ; by possessing the beauties of holiness, and by enjoying the presence of God. Such is the true glory of our Lord's kingdom, which renders it incomparably superior to every temporal monarchy.

It must therefore be very absurd to think of doing honor to Christianity, by erecting *pompous places* of worship, by *consecrating* those places, and by adorning with *showy vestments*, in the performance of public worship. Let the palaces of princes, and the mansions of the mighty, be magnificent and richly ornamented ; let the nobles and judges of the land, when acting agreeably to their different characters, appear in robes of state and in robes of magistracy ; as those things belong to the kingdoms of *this world*, nor pretend to any thing more, there is *nothing amiss*, nothing inconsistent with station

or profession. But confine them there, and by no means think of decorating the kingdom, or of promoting the cause of Christ by any thing similar. Were any man to lacerate gold, and paint the diamond, to increase their lustre, he would certainly be considered as insane. Yet the conduct of those persons is more absurd, who borrow the trappings of secular kingdoms, to adorn the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ.

As to *places of worship*, conveniency is all that is wanted, and all that becomes the simplicity of Christianity. To lay the first stone of such an edifice with solemn formalities, is Jewish*: to dedicate it, when completed, to any particular saint, is manifestly superstitious: to consecrate it by any solemn form, looks as if it succeeded to the honors of Solomon's temple; as if the Deity were expected to reside in it, rather than grant his presence to the congregation worshipping there; and as if it were to possess a relative holiness, like that of the ancient sanctuary. I may venture to add, that any religious parade at the first opening of such a place, is apparently inconsistent with the idea of all distinction of places, in regard to worship, being abolished, and too much resembles a Jewish or a Popish consecration†.

*Ezra iii. 10, 11.

† I will here subjoin a few particulars mentioned by Mr. James Owen, relative to Consecrations. He shows, that the Israelites dedicated not only the tabernacle and temple, but also their private houses

In regard to *ministers*, when attending to any branch of their holy function, let them not think of heightening their own importance, or of promoting the cause of Christ, by imitating Jewish or pagan priests, adorned with peculiar habits, when performing their different rites.

and their cities. (Deut. xx. 5. Psalm xxx. *title*. Nehem. xii. 27).—That the Jewish synagogues were not consecrated, nor esteemed holy, as the temple was—That the consecration of places for Christian worship was invented in the time of *Constantine*—That Christians had not long been in possession of consecrated temples, before they thought it expedient to furnish them with altars; and being provided with altars, they afterwards invented the sacrifice of the mass—That the Papists, like the old Pagan Romans, first consecrate the ground, and then the edifice erected upon it—That *Durandus* argues for the consecration of churches, from the example of Nebuchadnezzar dedicating his golden image—That Roman Catholics consecrate, with various formalities, the first foundation stone of a building intended for public worship—That they consecrate bells priests-garments, and almost every thing belonging to their corrupted worship—That though in England, since the Reformation, it does not appear that any Form for the consecrating of churches, & burying grounds, has received the sanction of public authority; yet various Forms for those purposes have been published and used—That the consecrating bishop *blesse*s the church or chapel, and prays “that the blessed Spirit
“ would send down on the *place his sanctifying power*
“ *and grace*”—That he consecrates the font, the pulpit, the reading-desk, the communion table, the paten, the chalice, and so on. *Hist. of Consecrat. of Altars, Temples, and Churches, passim.*

If Christian ministers be decently clothed, when in their own families, when visiting their friends, or when walking the streets; why should they not be considered as properly habited for the performances of their sacred office? What reason can be assigned for the use of any particular dress, when engaged in public service, that would not militate against the spirituality of our Lord's kingdom, and the simplicity of his worship?

It may, perhaps, be said; "Clerical habits are indifferent and harmless things, except when they are imposed." But if so, the idea of imposition being excluded, the canonical dress of a Popish priest, the red hat of a cardinal, and the triple crown of a pontiff, may all be justified: for, in themselves, they are equally harmless as the gown, the surplice, or the band. Innocent, however, as all these peculiarities are, detached from the ministerial character, and from holy worship; the *reason* or *motive* of wearing them in sacred service, may be carnal, base, and sinful. In some, there is too much ground of suspicion, a desire of being esteemed by the vulgar, either as persons of learning, or as episcopally ordained, when they are not so, and, in others, a lust of increasing their learned and priestly importance, are the latent reasons of wearing these idle badges of clerical distinction. But when illiterate men assume the garb of learning, their vanity is contemptible: when they intend, by so doing, to obtain that respect from the ignorant, of which they know

themselves unworthy, their practical falsehood is detestable: and when any minister thinks of magnifying his office, by pomposity in the pulpit, he betrays his ignorance relating to the nature of that kingdom in which he professes to be an officer.—Do the laws of this holy empire forbid the subjects to affect shining and costly apparel, as not becoming those who *profess godliness**; and will not the principle of that prohibition apply with increasing force to the case before us? Is it inconsistent with that spiritual mindedness, of which every avowed disciple of Christ makes an implicit profession, to be fond of a showy dress in the intercourse of common life; and can it be suitable to the simplicity of Christian worship, to the character of its Lord, or to the example of his Apostles, for ministers to make a more grand appearance, and take more state upon them, when performing their solemn service, than at any other time? Let those who understand the Christian system, and are heavenly minded, form the determination.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that the ancient people of God had a splendid sanctuary, and a sumptuous temple, that the Jewish priests, when performing sacred service, appeared in holy garments; and that the high priest, on certain occasions, was richly adorned, in a manner peculiar to his office. But then it is plain, that those things were expressly appointed by

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* 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4

Jehovah ; that the dispensation to which they belonged was of a typical nature ; that they were suited to the church while in a state of minority ; that the whole Jewish nation was then the visible church ; that Jehovah was not only the God ; but also the King of that nation ; that the ancient sanctuary was a palace, where political royalty resided*, as well as a temple, where Deity was adored ; and that the priests were officers in the state, as well as ministers of religion. To such a politico-ecclesiastical kingdom the splendor of the sanctuary, and the dress of the priests, were manifestly adapted. Hence the tabernacle is called *a worldly sanctuary*, and the rites performed there *elements of the world*†. To these, the heavenly sanctuary, into which our Great High priest is entered ; and the spiritual worship of the Christian church, stand opposed. —It should not be forgotten, that though the Son of God, when displaying his glory as King of the Jewish state, took up his abode in the sanctuary, as in a royal palace ; yet, when *he came into his own country* ||, as King of the Gospel Church, he had not *where to lay his head*.

What, then, have the splendor, the laws, or the rites of Judaism, to do in the New Economy ; except we mean to convert the Christian Church into the Jewish temple ? Grandeur and show ; whether as pertaining to places of wor-

*Matt. v 35. † Heb. ix 1. Gal. 43, 9 Col. ii. 8, 20.

|| Joh. i. 11. See Dr. Doddridge in loc.

ship, or to ministers of the word, are abhorrent from the Gospel Dispensation: nor, under the present Economy, have they any other tendency, than to gratify that pride from which they originate, and to give the kingdom of Christ a secular appearance.—The New Economy being intended for all nations and all succeeding ages, is equally fitted for the rich and the poor: nor does it make any distinction, in regard to places, where its worship should be performed. That God be adored *in spirit and in truth*, according to his own rule, is all it requires of one congregation or of another. It disdains, therefore, to borrow any part of its glory, from the grandeur of an edifice, or from the garb of a minister. Though far from supposing rusticity, illiteracy, and meanness, to be characteristics of a Gospel church; yet I may venture to assert, that an assembly of princes in a splendid cathedral, with an archbishop appearing in canonical pomp, may insult the Divine Majesty, and be utterly unworthy the name of a church; while a congregation of day-labourers, with an illiterate minister in the meanest habit, convened in a barn, may be a spiritual temple, enjoy the Divine Presence, and perform the Christian worship in all its glory.—It has been well observed; by a certain author, that “the presence of God confers dignity and importance:” but that “he can receive none from created, much less from artificial pomp and magnificence.” To which I will add, in the words of Dr. OWEN; “If the whole structure of the temple, and all

“its beautiful services, were now in being on the
 “earth, no glory would redound unto God there-
 “by he would receive none from it. To expect
 “the glory of God in them, would be an high
 dishonor unto him*.”

If secular grandeur, however, must needs attend the religion of Him who was born in a stable, and lived in poverty, who received the acclamations of royalty, when riding upon an ass, and quickly after expired on a cross; - if I say, it *must* appear in the worship of any who pretend to follow the Fishermen of Galilee, those prime ministers in the Messiah's kingdom, let it be confined to such as avow themselves members of a National establishment. For, with regard to those who maintain that particular churches are Congregational, consisting of such as make a credible profession of repentance and faith; pomp and show in the worship of God are quite unbecoming their principles. Yes, let those monopolize the splendor in question, who consider the church and state as of equal dimensions; who acknowledge a visible head of political royalty; and who must search, not the New Testament, but a code of Canons and Constitutions larger than the whole Bible†, if they would

* *On the Person of Christ*, p. 254, 355.

† Referring to *Gibson's Codex*. “When,” says Sir Michel Forster, “Christianity became the established religion of the empire, and church and state became one body, considered only in different views and under different relations; the ecclesiastical

know on what foundations their ecclesiastical fabric stands, and by what laws it is governed. The National form of the Jewish church being their model, and a temporal monarch being their head, why should not they have magnificent cathedrals, and consecrate them like Jewish temples? Why shou'd not ancient Judaism be imitated in these particulars, as well as in other things? As the head of the English Church is adorned with royal robes; as the principle officers in it are appointed by him, and are Lords in the legislature; and as it is established by the laws of the state, who shall forbid the various orders of its ministers being adorned with sounding titles, and with pompous canonicals? There is no reason to wonder that, in such a constitution & such a polity, almost every thing should wear a secular appearance. For, political authority pervading the whole ecclesiastical frame, it would be inconsistent with itself if its various parts had not an air of external grandeur. As a kingdom of this world, it is respectable; but it should not pretend to any thing more.

But, however it may be with a National establishment, let not Protestant Dissenters behave as if they envied, either its magnificence, or its emoluments. No: let not those who consider the Church and the World as opposite i-

“and civil laws of the empire flowed from one and the same source, imperial rescripts.” *Examinat. of Bp. Gibson's Codex* p. 122. Edit. 3d.

deas; who maintain, that Christ only is the head of Christian communities; and that the New Testament contains the whole of their ecclesiastical polity, be desirous of external grandeur in any thing pertaining to public worship; lest they practically deny their own principles, & implicitly reproach primitive Christianity for being too simple and too spiritual. It is frequently much easier for people, and much more desired by them, to assemble in an elegant edifice, and for their minister to appear in canonical fashion; than to perform a spiritual worship, and to shine in the beauties of holiness. The splendor of a place for assembling, and the pageantry of clerical dress, are procured by money; but the graces of real sanctity, and internal devotion, are of heavenly origin: nor is the exercise of them to be expected, unless by those who are habitually aiming at it.—I will add, whatever kind of succession to the Apostles may be claimed by diocesan bishops*, yet let not Protestant Dissenting ministers implicitly arrogate an apostolic mission, powers, and authority, by calling themselves *AMBASSADORS of Christ*. For that character, it is plain, belonged to the first-rate messengers of our divine Sovereign. Or, if any of those who publish the gospel of peace consider a title of that high importance as quite suitable to the dignity of their ecclesiastical station, their credentials must be produced,

* See Dr. Owen's *Nature of a Gospel Church and its Government*. p. 33.

By this characteristic of our Lord's kingdom, and by the general nature of it, we are further taught, that *simplicity* and *spirituality* must constitute the chief glory of that worship which he requires—This forms another striking disparity between the Messiah's government and the ancient Theocracy.—It has been observed, by Dr. ERSKIN, that “the respect paid to God, under “the Old Testament Dispensation, correspond- “ed to his character as a temporal monarch; and “in a great measure consisted in external pomp “and gaiety, dancing, instrumental music, “and other expressions of joy usual at coronations or triumphs. But the hour is now come, “in which the true worshippers must worship “the Father in spirit and in truth; not with external show and pageantry*.” Yes, numerous rites, and ceremonious pomp, were appointed by Jehovah in the first establishment of the Jewish church: to which various additions were made, by divine order, in the time of David†. These things were undoubtedly suited to the nature of that Dispensation, and to the church of God, while in a state of minority‡. On worship, so various in its branches, and so splendid in appearance, multitudes attended, and found amusement in it, who were in their hearts disaffected to God. In hearing the temple music, vocal and instrumental, there is no doubt but numbers of ungodly people were much delight-

**Theological Dissertations*, p. 69. † 1 Chron. xiv. 4, 5, 6. 2 Chron. xxix. 25. ‡ Gal. iv. 1—7.

ed. Such a concert, by persons trained to the employment, and under the direction of skilful masters, must produce very pleasing emotions in the attending multitude: a great majority of whom, it is highly probable, considered their system of worship as the best that could be appointed, it being so grand and so delightful.

But though that system was fitted both to the people, and to the times; though it was of great utility, and answered the purpose of Jehovah, under a shadowy dispensation; yet the New Testament informs us, that its numerous rites were the mere *elements* of spiritual knowledge, and of holy worship. Nay, compared with appointments and services of the Christian church, that they were *beggarly elements* and *carnal ordinances**.—Why, then, should any professors of Christianity be so fond of ceremonious pomp in the worship of God? Why so attached to the language and forms of Judaism, or practise a ritual nearly akin to the rubrics of Moses? Why call the holy supper a *sacrifice*, the Lord's table an *altar*, and the administrator a *priest*? Why have recourse to the temple worship for musical instruments, and for a set of singers distinct from the congregation at large? Why should responsive singing, and tunes more fit for a theatre than for the worship of God, be heard in religious assemblies? Why, without an appointment for alternate singing, should one part of the congregation suspend an act of social worship,

* Gal. iv. 9. Heb. ix. 10,

while the other carries it on? To these and similar queries the answer must be; Because things of this nature amuse and please the carnal mind, Because the simplicity and spirituality of New Testament worship have no charms for the multitude—And because the generality love to perform something called *religious worship*, in a way of their own devising. To save appearances, however, as many things in the Jewish ritual were pretty well adapted to please the carnally minded, they will be contented with having the Christian worship reformed, in various particulars, according to the ancient model, as completed in the time of David.-----Who, that enters a splendid edifice, where he beholds a minister in his canonicals, and meets with so h entertaining worship, can forbear to think of the temple service? Such through a course of ages, has been the predilection of multitudes for ancient Judaism, that a number of its peculiarities which were either honorable and profitable to the priests, or amusing and pleasing to the people, have been incorporated with Christianity, notwithstanding the mischiefs produced by similar conduct in the apostolic churches.

I said *Honorable and profitable* to the priests---
Amusing and pleasing to the people. But here they stop: for those branches of Judaism that were of a different kind, are treated as entirely obsolete. So, for instance, though numbers of Christian ministers are fond enough of priestly vestments, and of tithes, *jure divino*; yet they

are not always inclined to *wash their feet* before they perform sacred service*; much less to perform it *barefoot*†——As to the people, though multitudes of them are greatly delighted with pompous appearances and musical sounds, they are far from being in raptures with *circumcision*. For notwithstanding that Abrahamic rite retained its obligation and utility, as long as any Jewish ceremony did; and though, in apostolic times, judaizing Christians had the highest opinion of its importance; yet, like the ancient baptismal immersion, it is now considered as too painful and too indelicate for polished persons to regard.——Thus the worship of the New Oeconomy is become a compound, unknown to the Bible, of Judaism and Christianity: and it is treated by too many ministers, as a trade, not a divine service; by numbers of people, as an article of decent amusement to the Lord's day, not as duty to God, and as a mean of preparing for heaven. “Men run to church, says ERASMUS, as to a theatre, to have their ears “tickled.” *The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?*‡

But though the magnificence of places intended for public worship, the consecration of

* Exod. xxx. 17——21. † See Dr. Lightfoot's *Temple Service*, Chap. I and X. and Dr. Gill on Exod. iii. 5,

‡ In 1 Cor. xiv. 19. † Jer. v. 31.

those places, canonical habits, and various amusing ceremonies are *now* defended (if defended at all by Scripture) on the ground of Old Testament customs ; yet we are taught by the most respectable ecclesiastical historians, that they originated in a perverse imitation of Paganism. Christians being surrounded with Heathens, of whose conversion they were desirous ; and the latter having been accustomed in performing their idolatrous worship, to the external pomp of temples and of ceremonies ; **CONSTANTINE** had no sooner abolished the superstitions of his ancestors than magnificent places of worship were erected, and consecrated with great parade : it being considered as unlawful, except in extraordinary cases, to perform any part of public worship in them, previous to their consecration. Heathens having often reproached Christianity, for the poverty and simplicity of its appearance, the Christians of the fourth century adopted many of the Pagan rites. Ministers of the word, for example, when performing their office, appeared in canonical habits, and with priestly pomp. Their newly erected temples were consecrated, by singing of such hymns as were thought suitable to the occasion, by prayers, and by thanksgivings. Then, in the Eastern churches, the responsive singing of David's Psalms was introduced ; precentors were appointed, and laws were framed by different Councils to direct the singers in the performance

of their service* —Such was the origin of those gaudy appearances which, to amuse the carnal mind, have so long corrupted the worship of God, and secularized the kingdom of Christ! *Vain man would be wise*, and, in his great wisdom, thinks it necessary to add a few ornaments and supports to this heavenly empire, of which it was entirely destitute when the Apostles left the earth. This was thought expedient, in order to render the religion of Jesus a little more pleasing, respectable, and edifying, than it was in its native state. But well may he demand, with the aspect of increased majesty, *Who hath required this at your hand?*

The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, in respect of its immunities, its riches, and its honors. Wealth, titles, and authority, are frequently conferred by secular princes: but they are all external things. A patent of peerage, or a lucrative office, gives no wisdom to the mind, no peace to the conscience, no holiness to the heart. The possessor, notwithstanding his plentiful income and splendid title, may be a fool, a wretch, and a disgrace to the human species.

—The highest honors and the greatest emoluments which the subjects of an earthly kingdom can enjoy are all of them unsatisfactory: and, therefore, the first favourites of temporal princes are sometimes the most unhappy. Of this we have a remarkable instance in Haman, the

* *Vid. Spanhemii Hist. Eccles. Secul. IV. p. 851.*
 854. *Venemoe Hist. Eccles. Secul. IV. § 128.*

prime favourite of Ahasuerus,——Great privileges and exalted honors are enjoyed by comparatively very few subjects of any temporal monarch; the nature of the case forbidding them to become general, among the inhabitants of any country. Dukedoms, marquises, and grants from the crown, are but seldom bestowed, how loyal soever the subjects may be. Besides, those distinguished favors are of short duration, and quite uncertain.

Whereas, the immunities, emoluments, and honors of our Lord's kingdom, are all of them spiritual and internal. They are suited to the state of an enlightened mind. to the feelings of an awakened conscience, & to the desires of a renewed heart. Pardon of all sin, and complete acceptance with God; adoption into the heavenly family, and a title of future glory, are some of the privileges and honors enjoyed by the subjects of this kingdom. Blessings, these, of infinite worth, because of their spiritual nature and immortal duration. Nor are they confined to a few distinguished favourites of our celestial Sovereign; for they are common to all his real subjects. Yes, they are all enriched, and all ennobled, with *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

Now, as the immunities, grants, and honors, bestowed by the King Messiah, are all of a spiritual nature; his faithful subjects have no reason to wonder, or to be discouraged, at any persecutions, afflictions, or poverty which may be-

them. Were his empire *of this world*; then indeed it might be expected, from the goodness of his heart and the power of his arm, that those who are submissive to his authority, zealous for his honor, and conformed to his image, would commonly find themselves easy and prosperous in their temporal circumstances. Yes, were his dominion of a secular kind, it might be supposed that an habitually conscientious regard to his laws, would secure from the oppression of ungodly men, and from the distresses of temporal want.—Thus it was with Israel under their Theocracy. When the rulers and the people in general were punctual in observing Jehovah's appointments, the stipulations of the Sinai Covenant secured them from being oppressed by their enemies, and from any remarkable affliction by the immediate hand of God. Performing the conditions of their National Confederation, they were, as a people, warranted to expect every species of temporal prosperity. Health, and long life, riches, honors, and victory over their enemies, were promised by Jehovah to their external obedience†. The punishments also, that were denounced against flagrant breaches of the Covenant made at Horeb, were of a temporal kind.†

† See Exod. xv. 25, 26. xxiii. 25—28. Lev. xxvi. 3--14. Deut. vii. 12--24 viii. 7, 8, 9. xi. 13--17. xxviii. 3--13. † Lev. xxvi. 14--39. Deut. iv. 25, 26, 27. xi. 27. xxviii. 15--68. xxix. 22--29. See Dr. Erskine's *Theolog. Dissertat.* p. 22--29. *External obedience*—Punishments of a temporal kind

In this respect, however, as well as in other things, there is a vast difference between the Jewish, and the Christian Oeconomy. This disparity was plainly intimated, if I mistake not, by the opposite modes of divine proceeding, in establishing Jehovah's kingdom among the Jews, and in founding the empire of Jesus Christ. To settle the Israelitish church, to exalt the chosen tribes above surrounding nations, and to render the ancient Theocracy supremely venerable, the divine Sovereign appeared in terrible majesty. Wasting plagues and awful deaths were often inflicted by eternal justice, on those who dared to oppose, or to oppress, the people of God. An angel was commissioned to destroy the Egyptian first born; Pharaoh, with his mighty host, were drowned in the Red sea; and the Canaanitish nations were put to the sword, that the subjects of Jehovah might possess their fertile country. Manifest indications these, with express promises, that the special Providence of God would exalt and bless the natural seed of Abraham with temporal felicity; provided they did not violate the Sinai Covenant.

These and similar expressions in this Essay are to be understood, as referring to the Sinai Covenant *strictly* considered, and to Jehovah's requisitions as the *king* of Israel. They are quite consistent, therefore, with its being the duty of Abraham's natural seed to perform *internal* obedience to that Sublime Sovereign, considered as God of the whole earth; and with *fiat* punishment being inflicted by him, in failure of it obedience.

his favor*. Yes, to deliver from spiritual mics, and to provide for spiritual wants; to indulge with spiritual riches, and to ennoble spiritual honors, are those royal acts which long to Him whose *kingdom is not of this world*. In the bestowment of these blessings, the glory of his regal character is much concerned. millions of his devoted subjects may fall by the iron hand of oppression, starve in obscurity, suffer accumulated affliction in other ways, without the least impeachment of his piety or his goodness, or his care, as the sovereign of his spiritual kingdom.

The kingdom of Christ is not like the dominion of secular princes, with regard to its limits and its duration. The widely extended monarchies and empires were confined to certain parts of the habitable globe, and in the course of a few centuries they came to an end. Not so, the kingdom of Jesus Christ: for thus runs the prophecy, respecting him and his kingdom *shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from river to the ends of the earth. All things shall bow down before him: all nations shall serve him. Unto him was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should adore him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom which shall not be destroyed. He shall reign upon the throne of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom*

* Joh. xii. 26. and xiv. 21, 23.

shall be no end†. Concerning the gradual enlargement and universal extent of this kingdom, our Lord speaks in his parable of a *grain of mustard seed*; and in that of *heaven*, pervading the whole mass of meal.—This holy empire shall issue in the ultimate glory: and tho' the present form of its administration will cease, when *God shall be all in all*; yet the glorified subjects of it shall never die, never be disunited, nor ever withdraw their allegiance from Jesus Christ. Such are the foundations of his dominion, and such the excellence of his government, that each of his real subjects will from the heart say; **LET THE KING LIVE!** *and let him reign, till all his enemies become his footstool*‡!

Once more; *The empire of Christ, or the Gospel Church, is called THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.* As our Lord, in the most emphatical manner, is denominated, **THE KING OF KINGS**: we may with propriety consider his holy monarchy, as *the kingdom of kingdoms*. This appellation, *the kingdom of heaven*, manifestly sets the New Testament church at the greatest distance from every secular monarchy, and teaches us to consider it as nearly allied to the heavenly state*. The subjects of it are described as born from above;

† Ps. lxxii. 8. 11. Dan. vii. 14. Luke i. 33.

‡ Ps. lxxii. 15. and c i. 1 Cor. xv. 25.

* Ecclesiam. Christi Jesu vere esse Regnum Cœlorum et inter ejus statum et conditionem ecclesiæ cœlestis, maximam intercedere affinitatem et conjunctionem. *Vitringa in Apocalyps.* p. 885. Amstælad 1719.

as the heirs of glory. They are governed by laws, indulged with privileges, and invested with honors, which are entirely spiritual, and all from heaven. The truths they believe, the blessings they enjoy, the obedience they perform, and the expectations they entertain, have a regard to heaven. It is the authority of a divine Sovereign under which they live, and his approbation to which they aim. The pleasures which they enjoy, considered as the subjects of Jesus Christ, are all of a spiritual nature, and all favour of the heavenly world.

As Christ is a spiritual monarch, his dominion respects the understandings, the consciences, the hearts of men; and is a preparation for that sublime state, where knowledge and rectitude, where obedience and love, where harmony and joy, are all in their full glory. The foundation of this government, as it respects individuals, is laid in regeneration. There the preparation for heaven begins: and all the genuine fruits of that important change, which is made by divine influence, in the mind, conscience, and heart of a sinner, have a tendency toward heaven, and many of them are anticipations of it. That worship which is performed by the subjects of Christ, is no farther spiritual, and agreeable to the New Oeconomy, than it is animated with such affections as abound in heaven. For the time is come, when those that worship the Father, *must worship him in spirit and in truth*. Knowledge and reverence of God, as revealed by the Mediator; confidence in him, and love to him;

self-abasement in his presence, and acquiescence in his dominion; are the principle ideas included in spiritual worship, whether as performed by the subjects of Christ here, or by the saints made perfect in glory.

It is manifest from this characteristic of our Lord's kingdom, that a profession of allegiance to him is entirely vain, not attended with *spiritual mindedness*: because it is natural for good subjects to seek the prosperity of that kingdom to which they belong. Now the interests of Messiah's empire are all of a spiritual nature. In the spread of evangelical truth, and the purity of divine worship; in the exercise of love, and the practice of holiness, the interests and honor of this kingdom chiefly consist. Indifference about these, is an evidence of the heart being disaffected to our divine Sovereign; but allegiance to him, will manifest itself by an habitual regard to them.—In whomsoever this holy Monarch reigns, there is a relish for spiritual riches, honors, & pleasures. To enjoy his favor, and bear his image; to perform his will, and behold his glory, are things of the highest importance in the esteem of real saints. Nor is it a mere dictate of the understanding and conscience, that it should be so. It is matter of choice: for their hearts are engaged on those objects.

It is common for subjects to imitate a sovereign whom they love and revere; especially, if they have derived signal benefits from his ad-
H

ministration. Now such is the nature of our Lord's government, that it is impossible for any one to be under it, without sincerely loving and profoundly revering him—without seeing an excellence in his example, which commands esteem and excites imitation,. But if we be fond of wealth, or emulous of grandeur and show ; if we pursue pre-eminence, and grasp at power ; we imitate the children of this world, not Jesus Christ. Those things are eagerly sought, and highly prized, by the subject of Satan, because they are carnally minded ; but he is unworthy to be called a disciple of Christ, who is not habitually striving to copy his example. Nor can any pretend, that he ever encouraged, by word or deed, the pursuit of secular distinctions, the acquisition of wealth, or the pleasures of sensuality, but quite the reverse. Far from seeking *honor which comes from men*, he neither courted the smiles of the rich, nor the patronage of the mighty : for *the friendship of this world, is enmity with God*. So our Lord esteemed it, and so must his disciples. To be the subjects of a spiritual kingdom, and to have our hearts on temporal enjoyments, are inconsistent. *To be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace*

As Christ is a spiritual sovereign, and his church a spiritual kingdom, all the subjects of his government must be considered, *as in a state of preparation for heaven*. The prevailing dispositions of their hearts are in favor of heavenly things ; and to promote the exercise of spiritual

affections, the New Oeconomy, in all its branches, is much better adapted than was the Mo-
saic system. For as it is the most perfect dis-
pensation of divine grace, that ever was, or
ever will be enjoyed on earth; so it makes the
nearest approaches to heaven.

It has been justly remarked by a certain au-
thor, "That the legal Oeconomy introduced
" that of Grace, by the gospel, and then vanish-
" ed away. The Dispensation of Grace, in like
" manner, is now performing its work, fulfil-
" ling its day, announcing, unfolding, intro-
" ducing the kingdom of glory: and *when that*
" *which is perfect is come, then that which is in*
" *part shall be done away.*"——Yes, the Old
Oeconomy, and the Jewish Theocracy, were
manifestly introductory to the Christian Dispen-
sation, and the Messiah's kingdom. Those,
being typical and shadowy, led to these, and in
them received their final completion. But the
New Dispensation, and the kingdom of Christ,
have no completion short of heaven. Thither
they lead, and there they terminate. No wor-
ship is agreeable to the Messiah's kingdom,
which is not animated by heavenly affections.
All the external services of religion are only so
many means to excite those holy effects, of pro-
moting communion with God, and of cultiva-
ting a heavenly temper. Consequently, the
worship of those who rest in exterior services, is
quite superficial, and has nothing spiritual, no-
thing heavenly in it.

Jehovah, under the former dispensation, ha-

ving chosen the Holy of holies for the place of his residence, the Jews were directed to address him in prayer, considered as on his throne *between the Cherubims**. They knew, indeed, that he inhabited celestial mansions; and therefore, when bending the knee before him, their hands were extended toward heaven†: but yet he was more immediately regarded by them, as residing in the earthly sanctuary. For notwithstanding their desire to be heard in *heaven*, “the cry of their prayer, and the eye of their faith, were directed first to the *mercyseat*.” The most eminent saints, under that Oeconomy, looked to God in both; did homage to him in both; nor could they have neglected him in respect of either, without being culpable.—Whereas, when Christians pray, they look directly to their *Father who is in heaven*, and as on a throne of grace in the celestial temple; without the least regard to any place upon earth, or to any visible object‡.

“God says Dr. Erskine, as husband of the Gospel church, claims from his people inward affection and love, and accepts them only who worship him in spirit and in truth. In the Mosaic covenant it was otherwise. There he appeared chiefly as a temporal prince, and therefore gave laws intended rather to direct

* 1 Kings viii. 27,--30, 38, 42, 44, 48. 2 Kings xix. 15. Psalm xxviii 2. lxxx. 1. Dan. vi. 10.

† 1 Kings viii' 22. ‡ See Dr. Goodwin on Christ the Mediator. B. VI Chap. iii.

“ the outward conduct, than to regulate the
 “ actings of the heart. Hence every thing in that
 “ Dispensation was adapted to strike his subjects
 “ with awe and reverence. The magnificence
 “ of his palace; and all its utensils; his nume-
 “ rous train of attendants; the splendid robes
 “ of the high-priest, who, though his prime
 “ minister, was not allowed to enter the Holy
 “ of holies, save once a year, and, in all his mi-
 “ nistrations, was obliged to discover the most
 “ humble veneration for Israel’s King; the so-
 “ lemn rites with which the priests were conse-
 “ crated; the strictness with which all impuni-
 “ ties and indecencies were forbidden, as things
 “ which, though tolerable in others, were un-
 “ becoming the dignity of the people of God,
 “ especially when approaching to him: all these
 “ tended to promote and secure the respect due
 “ to their glorious Sovereign.”—It was, how-
 “ ever, foretold, by one of the minor Prophets,
 “ that in Gospel times, men should not call God
 “ *Baali* i. e. *my Master*, but *Ishi* i. e. *my Hus-*
 “ *band*.—The passage imports at least thus much,
 “ that God, who in the Jewish Dispensation
 “ had chiefly displayed the grandeur, distance,
 “ and severity of a master, would, in the Chris-
 “ tian Dispensation, chiefly display the affection
 “ and familiarity of a husband and friend*.

Yes, under the Mosaic system, the high
 priest only, and he but once a year, was admit-

* *Theological Dissertations*, p. 4, 5, 6.

ted to the mercy seat, or throne of Jehovah, in *a worldly sanctuary*. That appearance of the Jewish pontiff before the Lord, though grand and solemn, was a mere emblem of spiritual things, and of that holy intercourse which all the subjects of this kingdom have with God, in the performance of spiritual worship. For as Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary, *with his own blood*: as he is there *a priest upon his throne*, uniting the sacerdotal censor with the regal sceptre; he ever lives, not only to govern his widely extended empire, but likewise to intercede for all his followers, and to be the medium of their access to the divine Father. In virtue of his atonement made on the cross, and of his appearance in the heavenly world, the meanest subjects of his dominion, when performing sacred service, *have boldness to enter into the holiest*. Each of them, in the exercise of faith, of hope, and of love, has access to the Divine majesty on a throne of grace; and each has reason to expect a condescending audience from the King Eternal. Hence we find, that New Testament saints are called *the domestics of God*; which “may have some relation to that peculiar nearness to God, in which the Jewish priests were: and refer to that great intimacy of unrestrained converse to which we, as Christians are admitted. In which respect our privileges seem to resemble, not only those of the people praying in the common court of Israel; but of the priests, worshipping in the house itself.”

§ Dr. Doddridge's Note, on Ephes. iii. 19.

The superior advantages of believers under the Christian Oeconomy, in regard to communion with God, and the sanctifying influence which that holy intercourse has on their minds, are strongly expressed in the following remarkable words: *But we all, in an unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord**. The Apostle here plainly alludes to that glory which appeared in the face of Moses, after his intimate converse with Jehovah on the mount. So dazzling was the lustre of his countenance, that the children of Israel *were afraid to come nigh him*. He therefore put a veil upon his face, that they might have familiar intercourse with him†: which veil was an emblem, not only of the Jewish blindness, but also of the darkness of that Dispensation.—Now, in contrast with these things, Paul informs us, that the glory of the divine perfections appears and shines in the *unveiled* face of Jesus Christ; that this glory is *beheld* by New Testament believers; and that, by behold-

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. *In an unveiled face*. So I humbly conceive, should here be rendered. Compare 2 Cor. iv. 6. where the inspired writer speaks of *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. That will admit the supplemental proposition *in*, as well as *with*, cannot, I presume, be doubted: and that the whole scope of Paul's reasoning in the context leads us to think of the face of *Christ*, rather than that of believers being unveiled, is, if I mistake not, solidly proved by the learned Ikenius

ing it, they are gradually *transformed into the glorious image of God*. What an illustrious view does the apostle here give us of the New Oeconomy ! He not only represents the state and privileges of the Gospel Church, as greatly superior to those of the Jewish people ; but as nearly approaching to the employments, and the fruitions of the celestial world. For we cannot easily form a more exalted idea of the business and blessedness of heaven, than that of contemplating the glory of God, and of making continual advances in likeness to him.

As, in the person of our Mediator, the nature of God and the nature of man were not united, till just before the commencement of this kingdom ; as God was not *manifested in the flesh* but with an immediate view to this holy and spiritual empire ; so there is no reason to wonder that the favored subjects of Messiah's government have a more intimate communion with Jehovah, than was ever enjoyed by the Jewish church. Under the Old Covenant, Israel in general had a kind of local nearness to God, in the performance of religious worship ; and real saints had spiritual communion with him. But then it was by means of priests, who had infirmities ; of sacrifices that were imperfect ; and of services, that were mere shadows of heavenly things : all which were confined to an earthly sanctuary. Whereas the subjects of

in his Dissertat. Philolog. Theolog. Dissertat. xvi. § 4, 5, 6. † Exod. xxxiv. 29, 35.

Jesus Christ have access to the Father of mercies without regarding any priest, besides their Sovereign ; any sacrifice besides his death ; any incense besides his intercession. All these they regard as appearing, as operating, as efficacious on their behalf, in the heavenly sanctuary. Yes, their High-Priest, who is of infinite dignity ; their sacrifice, which is of boundless worth ; and their incense, which is consummately fragrant, are for ever in the immediate presence of God--for ever deserving, and for ever obtaining the divine approbation. On these, therefore, in all their approaches to Eternal Majesty, their dependence fixes. Hence their worship is performed, through the aids of grace, with reverence and with confidence, with love and with delight. *We have access with confidence, by the faith of Christ.*

Now, to worship God with profound reverence yet without a slavish fear ; with steady confidence, connected with deep humility ; with submission to his will, as the most high Lord ; with love to his excellence, as the infinite beauty ; and with joy in his allsufficiency, as the Chief Good ; is to perform a spiritual service, and to adore in a heavenly manner. In the performance of such worship, we have communion with *the spirits of just men made perfect*--we enter within the veil--we have fellowship with God--we anticipate the business of heaven, and taste its refined pleasures. In these holy exercises of the mind, conscience, and heart, we feel ourselves near to God, as the fountain of all

bleſſedneſs, and are trained for the heavenly world. Thus we are habituated to a kind of celeftial ſervice, by which our likenefs to Chriſt is promoted, and our deſires after heaven increaſed. In theſe things the very life of ſpiritual worſhip and of real religion conſiſts. He therefore is not worthy to be called a ſubject of our Lord's kingdom, who is not habitually aiming in his devotional ſervices, at his delightful and ſolemn intercourse with God. Nor is he deſerving of that exalted character, whoſe thoughts and cares, whoſe hopes and fears, whoſe joys and ſorrows, are not principally concerned about the government and grace of Chriſt, conſidered in their connection with the heavenly ſtate.

It muſt, indeed, be admitted, that this communion with heaven is extremely imperfect in the preſent life. Becauſe, though every true ſubject of the King Meſſiah be in a ſtate very different from that of a merely nominal Chriſtian, and though he is thankful for that difference; yet he is nor, he cannot be ſatisfied, either with what he knows, or with what he enjoys; with what he is, or with what he does. Not with what he *knows*: for he knows but *in part*, and he feels the deficiency. His acquaintance with the Greateſt and Beſt of beings—with the character and perfections, with the works and ways of God, is extremely ſmall. His knowledge of the adorable Jeſus—of his Perſon and offices, of his grace and work, of his kingdom and glory, is very contracted. Nay, the know-

edge he has of himself, and of his final destination in the heavenly world, is exceedingly scanty : for *the heart is deceitful above all things ; and it does not yet appear what we shall be*. He cannot therefore be contented with such a pittance of spiritual knowledge.

Not with what he *enjoys* : for his enjoyment of spiritual pleasure is, at the highest, comparatively low. Besides, it is frequently interrupted by the insurrections of indwelling sin, and by the incursions of outward temptation. Though he sometimes exults in the light of God's countenance, partaking of joy that is *unspeakable and full of glory* ; yet he frequently mourns the want of that exalted pleasure, and *groans being burdened*.

Not with what he *is* : for he feels much depravity, and laments over it, as affecting his mind with darkness ; his conscience with guilt, or with stupidity ; and his passions with carnality. So far from perfectly bearing the image of Christ, that his language frequently is ; *O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death !*

Not with what he *does* : for though he sincerely desires to perform the will of God, as revealed in divine precepts, and illustrated by the example of Christ ; yet he perceives that his obedience is very imperfect. Does he, for instance address himself to God in prayer ? in that devout exercise his whole soul should be engaged. Reverence of the divine Majesty, and an abasing sense of his own guilt ; faith in the great atone-

ment, and confidence in paternal mercy ; the ardour of petition, and the comfort of expectation, should all be united. But frequently, alas ! his thoughts wander, and his pious affections are dull, if not dormant. His prayer seems little besides a conflict with his own corruption. He rises from his knees with sorrow and with sighs. Ashamed of the manner in which he has treated the omniscient object of his worship, he cannot forbear exclaiming ; *God be merciful to me a sinner !* and this, perhaps, is the only petition over which he does not mourn, as destitute of holy animation. — Or if he enjoy liberty in his converse with the Father of all mercies, how often does he find secret pride, and self-gratulation arise in his heart ? as if the Most Holy would regard his confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings for the sake of their own excellences ! Aware of the latent poison he is almost confounded. For while he knows, that Christianity is the religion of sinners—of depraved, of guilty, of unworthy creatures : and that nothing is more inconsistent with evangelical truth, or more detestable in the sight of our Maker, than self-applause respecting acceptance with God. Knowing himself to be a polluted worm, that deserves to perish, he trembles to think of ever supposing that the majesty of the Most High, and the purity of the Most Holy, will accept his imperfect services for their own sake. In the most emphatical manner he, therefore, with Job exclaims ; *Behold I am vile !—I abhor myself ! So various and so great are the defects in our devo-*

ional services, that we might well despair, were it not for a High-priest who bears the iniquity of our *holy things*. For we find a law that when we would do good, evil is present with us.

To such imperfections and such complaints, is a real subject of our Lord's dominion liable in the present life. But, looking forward to the separate state, when he shall *be with Christ, which is far better*, and to the resurrection of the righteous; with joy he adopts the language of David and says, *I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness*. Yes, when that ultimate and everlasting Oeconomy commences, his mind being irradiated with divine truth, he shall be satisfied with what he *knows*: perfectly possessing the Chief Good, he shall be satisfied with what he *enjoys*; conscious of complete rectitude, he shall be satisfied with what he *is*: and knowing his obedience to be consummate, he shall be satisfied with what he *does*.-- Delightful, ravishing thought! To have all our immortal powers expanded and filled, with knowledge of the Supreme truth, and with love to the Supreme Beauty; with reverence of the Supreme Lord, and with delight in the Supreme Good, must constitute complete happiness. Yet such is the grand result of our Lord's dominion in the hearts of men! To this, therefore, we must look, upon this our affections must be placed, if we would behave as the subjects of Jesus Christ, and finish our course with honor. For *this life is the seed-time of an eternal harvest*.

as no one *gathers grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles*; and as *whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap*; so we have no reason to expect heaven as our final residence, if we be not habitually desirous of communion with God in all our worship, and of making it our business to perform his will.

It is one of the noblest and most delightful employments of the human mind, to contemplate the gradual revelation of Jehovah's will, and the growing display of his eternal favor, from the fall of our first parents, to the consummation of the divine Economy. It is both pleasing and improving to reflect on the Patriarchal Dispensation introducing the Mosaic System; on the Sinai Confederation making way for the New Covenant; on the Jewish Theocracy leading to the Kingdom of Christ; on the government of that kingdom as a preparation for celestial mansions; on the performance of holy worship, by the subjects of Christ here, as the mean of communion with *saints in light*; and on the present state of worship and of blessedness in the heavenly sanctuary, as preparing for the ultimate glory.

In reference to the communion of believers with *the spirits of just men made perfect*, in the performance of spiritual worship; and respecting the consummation of all things, Dr. OWEN speaks as follows, with whose words I shall conclude. "Were all that die in the Lord immediately received into that state wherein God *will be all in all*, without any use of the me-

“ dication of Christ, or the worship of praise
 “ and honor unto God by him, without being
 “ exercised in the ascription of honor, glory,
 “ power and dominion unto (Christ,) on the ac-
 “ count of the past and present discharge of his
 “ office ; there could be no communion between
 “ them and us. But whilst they are in the *sanc-*
 “ *tuary, in the temple of God, in the holy wor-*
 “ *ship of Christ, & of God in him, & we are not*
 “ only employed in the same work in sacred or-
 “ dinances suited unto our state and condition,
 “ but in the performance of our duties do by
 “ faith *enter in within the veil*, and approach
 “ unto the same throne of grace in the most holy
 “ place ; there is a spiritual communion between
 “ them and us. So the Apostle expresseth it, in
 “ the twelfth of Hebrews——As we are here,
 “ in and by the word and other ordinances, pre-
 “ pared and made meet for the present state of
 “ things in glory ; so are they, (the spirits of
 “ the just men made perfect) by the temple wor-
 “ ship of heaven, fitted for that state of things
 “ when Christ shall *give up the kingdom unto the*
 “ *Father, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL**.”

* *On the Person of Christ*, Chap. xx. p. 365, 366.

END OF THE ESSAY.



DOCTRINE
OF THE
COVENANTS.

WHEREIN IS SHEWN

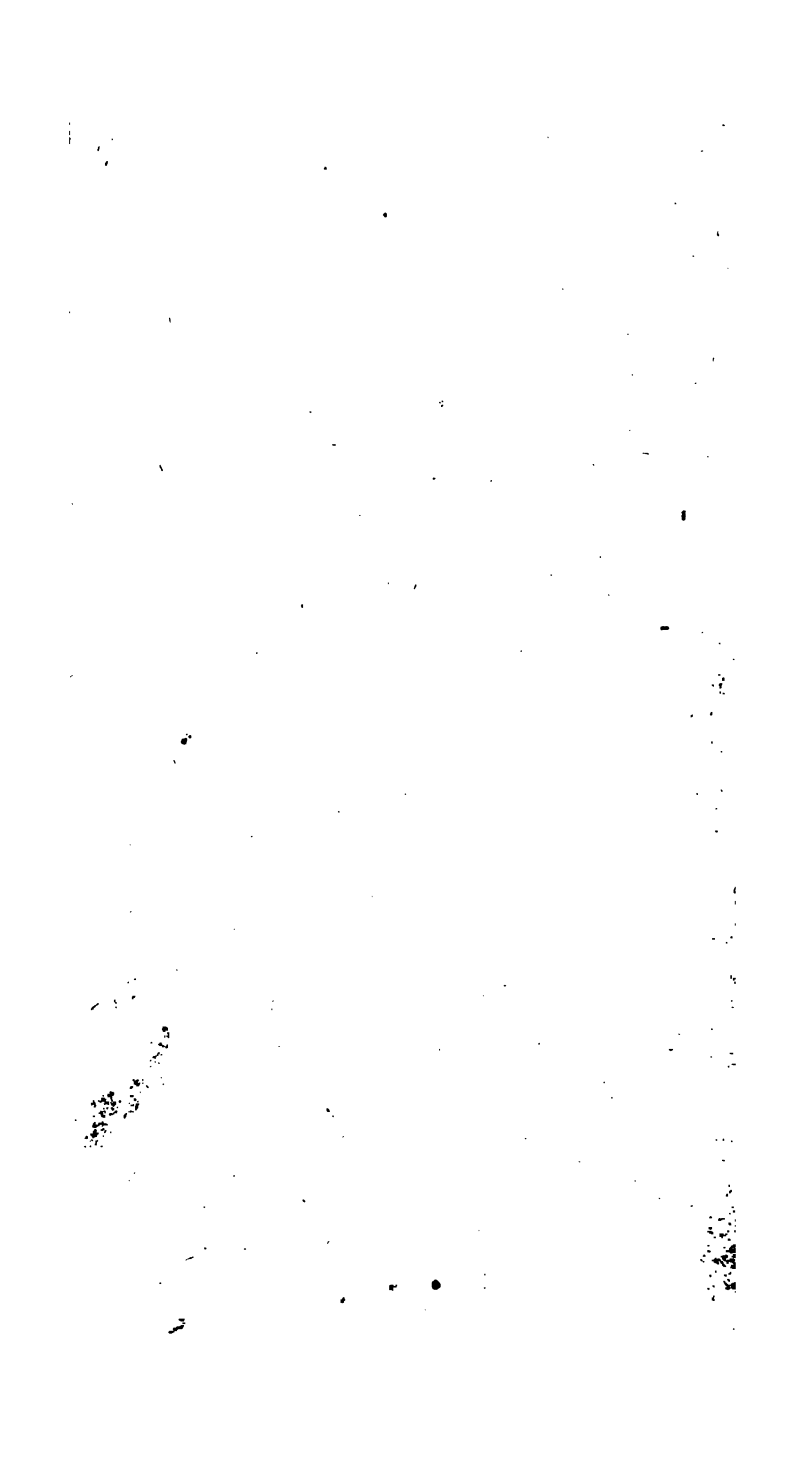
That there never was a COVENANT of WORKS
made with *ADAM*; nor any other COVENANT
ever made with *MAN*, respecting things purely of a
SPIRITUAL NATURE.

By *SAMUEL JONES*, A. M.

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And searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

THERE is no truth more generally assented to, by all parties and denominations of Christians, than this; that the Scripture is the only rule of faith and practice. They all cry, "*To the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" Isaiah viii. 20. Notwithstanding, we have too much reason to fear, that in this case, as in many others, people are generally more sound in principle than in practice. For in drawing up a system of religious truths, for instance, the writers have either too implicitly followed those who have gone before them, or have consulted their own notions & made their systems, not so much what, from the word of God, they would be, as what they imagined they ought to be; and then have endeavoured to accommodate the Scriptures in support of them. That the Scripture should suffer by this mode of proceeding it is easy to see, when we consider the natural fondness of people, generally speaking, for their own notions, and how pliable the Scripture will become in the hands of such, like a nose of wax, to suit every purpose.

This, however, ought to serve to put us the more on our guard, and to engage us the more to follow the example of the noble Bereans, in searching the Scriptures daily, to see whether

the things advanced be so. The reading of the whole verse informs us, that the Bereans were more noble than those of Thessalonica, on this account, that they searched the Scriptures. It would seem that the Thessalonians, were either, Gallio-like, indifferent about the truth, and therefore would not be at the pains of searching; or were so bigotted to their received notions, that they would not search further. These are two extremes equally to be avoided by all enquirers after truth. Let us always remember then, that to be clear of the shackles of prejudice, on the one hand, and of careless indifference on the other : and so press forward in pursuit of truth searching for it as for hid treasure, determined to embrace it, wherever we find it, is a noble thing ; while at the same time it is fulfilling a positive injunction of our blessed Lord, when he said, "*Search the Scripture.*" John v 39.

The sentiments, or points of doctrine, concerning which we mean at this time to search the Scripture, are those of the Covenants, commonly distinguished into three ; the covenant of works, the covenant of grace, and the covenant of redemption. The first made with Adam in the state of innocence ; the second made with him immediately after the fall, which is said to have been afterwards renewed with Noah, Abraham, and others of the Patriarchs ; and the third made with Christ.

In searching the Scriptures, whether these *things be so*, we shall take them up, one after another, as they lie before us, and so begin with

the covenant of works.

What is commonly called the covenant of works, relates to the transactions of God with man, in the state of innocence, respecting the forbidden fruit ; which some for that reason call the covenant of innocence ; while others call it the covenant of works, as above, as if there ever was, or could be, a covenant relating to service, without works ; and others again call it the covenant of life though it respected death as well as life, if not something more, and which of the two took place. Thus do the inventors and abettors of this national covenant, disagree among themselves, as is generally the case, when people wander in the dark wilderness of their own fancies, without the guidance of divine revelation.

But what saith the scripture ? Let us turn to the passage, Gen. ii. 16, 17. “ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Now, is there any thing here, that looks like a covenant ? Not a word ; not a syllable. But on the other hand, we have every mark, every character of a law. First, we have it prefaced with authoritative titles of the enactor ; And the Lord God. Then we have the language of authority and of law ; And the Lord God *commanded* the man. After that we have the permission and prohibition, informing the subject, what he might, and what

he might not do. Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it. And lastly, we have the threatening, or penalty and sanction, to secure and enforce obedience, or to be inflicted in case of disobedience. For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. So little appearance of a covenant is there in this place, that it may seem strange it was ever thought of.

But let us search further. Where are the scriptures brought by the writers on this subject, in support of the covenant of works ? Is there no passage to that purpose somewhere forward, from Genesis to Revelation ? Not one. The bodies of divinity, the Baptist and Westminster Confessions of faith, as well as all the covenant-writers I have seen, they all fail. There is one passage, indeed, in Hosea vi, 7, which they would be willing to lay some stress upon ; but then it must be first mended. The present translation must be found fault with, and another offered in stead of it. The text says. " They like men have transgressed the covenant." But these translation-menders would have it rendered, " They like Adam. What a valuable invention this translation-mending is ! How often has it helped people to a scripture, when in the greatest strait ! While at other times it has removed scriptures out of their way, that they *could not well get over**. But I think the great

*It is not to be doubted, but that the present trans-

or Gill, who was a master in the Hebrew, no great stress on this emendation, while sets the value of it on the little word *if*; his translation, says he, if it can be supported; don't pretend to say it can, but *if* it can, it be a scripture in support of the covenant works. The passage undoubtedly means no more than this; that they, the children of Israel, who were God's covenant people, as we see by and by, had transgressed God's covenant, as men too commonly do transgress or break covenants made with one another. "They men have transgressed the covenant."

But let us search the scriptures, not to see if there be any passage in it to prove that there is a covenant of works, for the writers before me have without doubt sufficiently done this, though they have done it in vain; but let us search to see, if there be any other text, besides in Genesis, in support of the *law* of works, to prove that Adam was under a law, though not under a covenant. I have long been of opinion, that one passage of scripture, if it be full and express to the purpose, is sufficient to prove a point; and that to add many others, as is commonly the way, out of a fondness for many witnesses does but weaken the cause, unless they be full in point. Of human witnesses,

none may be mended in some places; but then, it is sincerely to be wished, that all lovers of the sacred text, would proceed in this business with a sparing and cautious hand, and perhaps never, but where the *consent* of the divine writings allow of, or require it.

it is true, two or three are required in capital actions; but what of this to divine testimony, since, as the apostle says, and as we all allow, "The witness of God is greater." 1 John v. 9. We are however in the present case not at a loss, for every where from forward of Genesis, where mention is made of the transaction in question, or reference had thereunto, it is called a law, and nothing else.

In Romans v. 12 for instance, sin is said to have entered into the world by one man, and death by sin. Now as death is the wages of sin, vi. 23. so is sin the transgression of the law, 1 John, iii. 4. Since therefore, the very act of Adam in eating the forbidden fruit, is said to be sin, transgression and disobedience, Rom. v. 15, 19. and since sin is the transgression of the law, and where there is no law there can be no transgression, iv. 15. it is clear that Adam was under a law. The apostle argues yet more expressly that Adam was under the law, when he says, that sin was in the world, before the giving of the law by Moses, v. 13. *i. e.* all along from Adam to Moses. But says he sin, is not imputed where there is no law, Rom, v. 14. "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them, that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," v. 14: that is infants who could not be guilty of actual sins, or transgression of a law, as Adam was. Since therefore death, the wages of sin, and penalty of the law, reigned even over infants, it must be that sin was imputed to A-

dam, and to infants on Adam's account, and therefore Adam was under a law, for sin is not imputed, where there is no law.*

Moreover, with respect to the second Adam, is there any thing said any where that he came, or was to come, to fulfil, keep and make good the covenant that the first Adam broke? What was the work of our blessed surety? Was it not to answer the demands of the law? Did he not stand in our law place? Was he not made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law? Gal. v. 55. Yes, and he answered the demand of the law too, in full, both penal and preceptive,* and thus keeping the law made it honorable, Isai. xlii, 21. Now, this was the very law that Adam was under, even the moral law.

For, though the prohibition of the forbidden fruit, was a positive law, given for the trial of his obedience, yet was he under the moral law, and, by the transgression of this positive precept fell from his moral righteousness; nor can there

* In the Westminster Confession of faith, every sin both original and actual is said to be a transgression of the law of God.—not covenant. So in the Baptist Confession of faith, Adam and Eve are said to transgress the law and the commandment given unto them, by eating the forbidden fruit. Likewise the larger catechism says, Our first parents transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit. To the same effect the Baptist Catechism says, That sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God,—not covenant.

be a breach of a positive law of God, without involving immorality.*

And besides, the nature of a covenant is incompatible with the relation subsisting between God and man, and therefore inadmissible. For the idea of a covenant includes these following things :

1. Mutual wants in the parties covenanting.
2. Mutual benefits enjoyed by them.
3. Power in each party to perform the conditions of the covenant.
4. Each party is brought under obligation to the other, by the performance of those conditions.

*In the present case it would be easy to conceive, that Adam, in eating the forbidden fruit, in a manner broke every precept of the moral law : for, he was guilty of setting up another God, of trampling on the authority of the true God, and profaning his holy name ; when he gave him the lie, disbelieved his word, disobeyed his command, and transferred all the honor of faith, worship, obedience, and hope, to another. He dishonored his parent in the highest manner. He was guilty of murder, in murdering himself and posterity, soul and body. He was guilty of theft and robbery, in robbing God of his glory, himself and posterity of innocence and happiness. While to receive a false witness, and act upon it, was no better than to bear false witness. And finally, he coveted the goods and property of another : and not only coveted, but took possession of, and devoured at once. Nor would it be difficult to shew, that this *one sin* involved in it, infidelity, pride, ingratitude, contempt, folly, cruelty, and those other affections and aggravations of sin.

5. Merit on both sides.

6. Either party may refuse, or object to the proposed conditions.

7. And, lastly, neither party ought to be under prior obligation to the other, respecting the conditions of the covenant.

Now, of these particulars not one can be admitted in the present case, except the third. For who will presume to say, that the Almighty stood in need of the service of man, or of any of his creatures; or that he could be benefited by the service of any of them; or that the service performed, could bring the glorious Creator under obligation to the creature; or that the creature could merit by his doings; or that man could refuse or object to what was enjoined on him; or lastly, that man was not under prior obligations to perform all that was required of him, and therefore would have been an unprofitable servant after all he had done. Luke xvii 10.

From the tenor of scripture then, and the nature of a covenant, it is manifest there never was a covenant of works made with Adam.

But some, perhaps, will object and say, "How could Adam be a public head, if he was not a covenant head, *i. e.* if there never was a covenant of works?" As if there was no way of being a public head, but in a covenant way. It might seem sufficient here to observe, that if there never was a covenant of works, as we have seen there was not; and if Adam could not be a public head, but in a covenant way.

then he was no public head at all. But, to me, there appears an easy way of solving this difficulty, That Adam was a public head and representative of his posterity, who were to stand or fall with him, no one can doubt, who will read the fifth chapter to the Romans, and the fifteenth of the first epistle to the Corinthians, with some other passages; and who will consider the event of the case in question, and the nature of things. But then, you will ask, "How could it be, if there was no covenant?" I answer, just in that very way it ought, and only could be, and that is, The appointment of God. It was the pleasure and will of God that Adam should stand in this public character and relation to his posterity; and so be a lively figure, or type, of him who was to come.

If any should enquire what advantage there is in denominating this transaction with Adam, in the state of innocence a law, rather than a covenant; we answer, much every way. First, in that it is of dangerous consequence to change the name of things, and put one word for another of very different import,* as will readily appear to any one, who will consider how much mankind are imposed upon by names, which is the ground of that wo pronounced:

*We may say of the word covenant, what doctor Ridgley, with his usual candour, says of the word stipulation, as applied to this doctrine. But, says he, *since it is to use a word without its proper ideas, which others annex to it, I humbly conceive this doctrine may be better explained without it.*

by the prophet when he says, "Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter," Isa. v, 20. And then the difference here is not in name only. A law and a covenant are very different things, as we have seen above. Besides, is there no advantage in adhering to the scripture? If we deviate from it in one point, why not in another, why not in every thing? To which we may add, that in following the Scripture by denominating this transaction with Adam a law rather than a covenant, we gain this mighty advantage, that we avoid nursing that legal strain of spirit, so natural to mankind, and at the same time so injurious to their everlasting happiness. To talk about covenants between God and men, and yet to be opposed to Arminianism, is a perfect solecism in divinity. Is it not manifest that all true Calvinists, all, who in reality favour the doctrines of grace, are amazingly embarrassed with the notion of covenants made with men respecting spiritual things, and pull down with one hand, what they build with the other? Thus, when they speak of the covenant of works, they will tell you, that it is a law-covenant. And when they speak of the covenant of grace, made with Adam and the faithful, they say it is not a covenant properly, but a free, absolute, unconditional covenant. Thus explaining away what they would seem willing to establish.

We shall now dismiss this head of discourse, and pass on, in the second place, to consider the ground of what is called the covenant of grace, which is said to have been first made with Adam, and afterwards renewed with others of the patriarchs, in favour of the faithful.

The passages of Scripture on which this is pretended to be founded, are those that relate to the discovery and manifestation of the rich grace of God, with respect to the recovery and redemption of sinful man, from his lost state and condition by the fall. But why these manifestations should be held forth to our view, under the notion of covenants, is hard to say. For when we search the Scriptures, whether these things are so, we find no appearance of that kind.

The first dawning of the gospel, and, at the same time, the first glimmering of hope, appeared to Adam, in the promise that was made respecting the seed of the woman, which was Christ, Gal. iii. 16. that it should bruise the serpent's head. Gen. iii. 15.

Although this was addressed to the serpent, yet being overheard by Adam, whom it more immediately concerned, and being comprehended by faith, under the influence of the spirit, it afforded some ground of hope. Here the eternal counsels of the mysterious grace of God began to unfold themselves.

In the promise made to Abraham, which was afterwards renewed to Isaac and Jacob. Gal. iii. 8. the same gospel grace breaks forth with clearer light. What had been spoken in more

general terms, of the seed of the woman, is now said in a more particular manner of the seed of Abraham. "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18.

To Jacob the very time of accomplishing the promise was limited, while it was said ; "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. xlix, 10.

Moses renders the promise still more manifest, while he points out a character and likeness. "A prophet," says he, "shall the Lord thy God raise up unto thee, of thy brethren like unto me ; unto him shall ye hearken." Deut. xvii. 15.

In the prophets, who were much further advanced in the dispensation of the promises, approaching to the fulness of time, hastening to the coming of the Messiah, you have his virgin mother, Isa. vii, 15. place of birth, Mich. v. 2. and other circumstances particularly pointed out.

Only observe the order and progress of the Divine promises, gathering light and strength as they advance. When the first intimation of a Saviour was given, he was to be sought for among all the human race. Afterward we are directed to the particular seed of Abraham. Of Jacob's numerous sons, the tribe of Judah is taken : Of the tribe of Judah the family of Jesse, Is. xii, 10 ; and of Jesse's sons, the house of David, Jer. xxiii, 5. Thus reducing as

were to a point, what had at first been delivered but in very general terms.

These are some of the leading and principal discoveries that were made to the world, of our blessed Saviour, before his incarnation. Thus did the promises and prophecies become brighter and brighter, until at last they shone more clear in their full accomplishment, when the Sun of Righteousness rose, dispelling darkness, and spreading the light of the gospel day. But what do we see in all this like a covenant? Nothing at all. No not the least shadow of it.

Let us now see how the apostles of our blessed Lord understood these things. What is the language of the New Testament? Exactly of the same tenor with what we have seen above. It speaks of promises, gifts, legacies; all free, absolute and unconditional. Let us cite a few passages: For the promise is unto you and your children, Acts ii. 39. Of this man's seed has God according to his promise, Acts xiii. 23. For the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, Acts xxvi, 6. Heirs according to the promise, Gal. iii. 21, 22, 29. The promise of eternal inheritance, Heb. ix, 19. To perform the mercy promised, Luke i. 72. And this is the promise, that he has promised us, even eternal life, 1 John ii. 25. For all the promises of God in him, are not yea and nay, *but* yea and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. In like manner we read of gifts: If thou knewest the gift of God, John iv. 10. Free gift, Rom. v. 15

—18. Unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15. Gave gifts unto men, Eph. v. 8. Hence also, the administrations of grace are called, the Old and New Testament, 2 Cor. xiii. 6, 14. because a testament commonly contains free gifts and legacies made over and insured to the heirs. How contrary is all this to the language and nature of a covenant.

In pages 110 and 111, we observed, that not any of the particulars included in the idea of a covenant could be admitted, in the transaction between God and man in the state of innocence, except one. But here, with respect to a covenant made with fallen man concerning spiritual things not one exception is to be made. The idea of a covenant is totally excluded. In the state of innocence man had power, and that was the only particular admissible. But now, he has lost his power, and there is not the least room left for the idea of a covenant on any ground whatever. The whole and sole dependence of man in his present state is the grace, the free grace of God.

Is it not strange, to hear people talk, that faith and repentance are the terms and conditions of the covenant made with man since the fall; and that the grace in this covenant consists, in that the terms are easy, and power given to perform them.† What work! What strange work! By those that pretend to favour

† Others again, second cousin to the first, talk that *sincerity is received in lieu of perfection.*

the doctrine of grace too : endeavouring to convert the gospel of the free grace of God into a covenant of works, with terms and conditions. Well may we address these men in the language of the apostle, when he says, "Ye are fallen from grace." Gal. v. 4. What a pity that they have yet to learn, that faith and repentance are the gifts of God, and the effect of his grace wrought in us, not any thing wrought by us ; and that they are so far from being *easy*, or *easier* than those things required of Adam in a state of innocence : that while these were perfectly practicable and easy ; those are absolutely impossible. A man may as well attempt to remove mountains, as to exercise faith and repentance. How shall he hate and loathe that, which is as natural for him to love and delight in, as it is for him to love himself ? Or how shall he loathe and abhor himself on account of that which he rolls as a sweet morsel under his tongue. Job. xx. 12. But when it is said, that power is given, freely given, to perform these impossibilities : this is destroying the nature of a covenant, converting terms and conditions into mere acts of sovereign grace, and transferring the claim of merit from us, to him, who does all our works in us. Isa. xxvi. 12.

As for those, who hold the power and liberty of the will of man to do good in the present state, as well as in the state of innocence ; and who therefore talk of terms and conditions to be performed by man, on performance of which, *he pleads* the merit of his good deeds, *claim*

he forgiveness of his sins, and full admission into happiness : it must be owned they are tolerably consistent with themselves, though they be totally inconsistent with the revelation of God's method of grace, which must bend and give way to their carnal and natural notions of things. But those, who hold that man has now lost his power and inclination to do good ; that he is dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. ii 1, that he is prone to evil as the sparks to fly upward ; that it is God that must work in him both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. Phil. ii, 13, and after all, that man's dependence is not on the merits of his own doings but solely on the merits of another, even that of our Saviour Jesus Christ ; that these should talk of covenants, terms and conditions, makes that they are neither consistent with themselves, nor the word of God. They may have sound hearts derived from experience, and in some measure sound heads ; but are strangely led astray by those legal expressions and modes of speaking, so totally foreign to the gospel.

We shall now pass on to consider the covenant made with the nation of the Jews, and a passage or two in the Prophets and to hasten to the last head of discourse.

The covenant made with Israel in the wilderness, commonly called the Abrahamic covenant, merits particular attention. When we consider this covenant, it appears to contain nothing of spiritual things ; nor to have any reference thereto, further than that the gospel prom-



ises, explained above, were mentioned along with it. It referred altogether to selecting the seed of Abraham from among the nations of the earth, to a national church state, and in that respect, a peculiar people, Deut, xxvi, 18. and to the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, The outward rituals and ceremonies of their church-worship, and serving the Lord as their king in their state of Theocracy, which they promised and had in their power to do, they were to observe, as the conditions of enjoying the promised land, and prosperity therein. Want of attention to this circumstance has been the occasion of much confusion. The first mention of this covenant was made to Abraham, which was afterward renewed with Isaac and Jacob; but it did not take its full form, until it was made with the whole body of the Jewish people in the wilderness. But let us consider the passages particularly that make mention of it.

To Abraham it was said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation. And I will bless them that bless thee: and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3. Afterward when he had come into the land of Canaan, it was said; "Unto thy seed will I give this land, Gen. xii. 7. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee

and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Gen. xvii. 7, 8. Here we see that the land of Canaan was the object of the covenant. And afterwards, the same was renewed with Isaac, because Abraham had fulfilled it. "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws," Gen. xxvi. 4, 5. So again to Jacob, nearly in the same terms, Gen. xxxvii, 13, 24.

In the wilderness as we mentioned before, the whole assumes more fully the form of a covenant; and we have the terms and conditions of it, and the consent of parties more at large.

"And Moses went up unto God; and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying. Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak un-

to the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words, which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord," *Exod xix. 8.*

In these words we seem to have the preface, and leading heads of the covenant proposed to the people before hand to which they assent. Then, in the 20th, 21st, 22d, and 23d chapters following, we have the particulars of the covenant penned down at large, so far as it respected the moral and civil law. And afterwards the same was read to the people for their assent, which they do, with some formal circumstances of confirmation, *Exod. xxiv, 3, 8.*

"And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, and said: All the words, which the Lord hath said, will we do," &c.

Then in the following chapters we have the ceremonies of divine worship entered at large; and, in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, the same are reduced into the form of a covenant.

Thus you see, this covenant (or, if you will, these covenants) respected only temporal blessings, and was enforced only by temporal rewards and punishments.

And forward, in the Old Testament, where ever mention is made of this covenant, or ref-

erence had thereunto, it is always spoken of and considered in this light. See Josh. xxiii. 16. Deut. xxix. 21—25. Jer. xi. Hence were the people of the Jews so often distressed and harrassed in the land of Canaan, for their breach of this covenant, Judg. ii. 20; and led out of it into captivity, 2 Kings xviii. 11, 12; and finally rejected from being the people of the Lord. And here it must be observed, that even this Israelitish covenant, was not a covenant properly, but as it were a law, tho' it was delivered in part in the form of a covenant. So far as it enjoined those things, that were of a moral nature, which they were therefore under prior obligation to observe and do, it was a law: but it was a covenant so far as it respected their theocratical state of government, and was a compact between them and the Lord their King; wherein he condescended to come under certain engagements to them as his people, upon certain conditions, which they promised, and had in their power to perform.

Now, as this covenant only referred to morality, the civil polity of the Jews, and the outward rites and ordinances of worship, which the apostle calls, Carnal ordinances and a worldly sanctuary, Heb. ix. 1. 10; and contained only temporal rewards and punishments, but nothing of spiritual blessings or gospel grace, unless it be in a typical way: It is clear, they might have kept this covenant in full, and not have been a whit the nearer heaven, or the more entitled to everlasting happiness.

To hold forth the pardon of sin, and the justification of the sinner ; and then heaven and happiness as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, without any meritorious condition, to be performed on the part of man ; this is peculiar to the gospel, and the glory of it. The glory I say of that gospel, with which the covenant now before us had nothing to do, unless typically, and which was first held forth to Adam, afterwards gradually increased in light, until at last it broke forth with meridian brightness, when the day spring from on high visited us, Luke i, 78. And on this very account, the Israelitish covenant is considered as being far inferior to the gospel, and particularly the dispensation of it, in these passages in the prophets, of which we made mention above, and which we shall now pass on to consider.

In Isaiah we read, “ As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord,” &c. Isa. lix. 21. Whether this text refers to the gospel or not, is a little doubtful. If it does, it will be of the same import with that in Jeremiah, where we have these words ; “ Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, alto’ I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those

days, saith the Lord ; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother; saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord ; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. xxxi. 31 — 34.

This passage undoubtedly refers to the gospel. But then, you see nothing in it that looks like a covenant. No ifs, no terms, no conditions : nothing to be performed by the creature in a way of merit. But, on the contrary, the language is pure gospel. It is not "I will, if they will;" but, I will and they shall." "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;" the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Spirit; And will be their God, and they shall be my people;" according to that saying, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;" "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The genuine language of sovereign grace.

Now the prophet speaks of these spiritual blessings, this pure gospel, as being totally different from the contents of the Israelitish covenant. For, says he, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of

Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers :” no, verily : but altogether different from it ; as different as spiritual things are from temporal, as the heaven is from the earth.

If any should here enquire, “ Why then is it called a covenant, if the contents of it be pure gospel, and the two are so very different ?” For their satisfaction I will suggest the following considerations.

1. That the word covenant in the Old Testament, sometimes means a statute, ordinance, establishment, appointment and decree : as in Jeremiah xxxiii. 25. “ Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night.” *i. e.* My appointment of the succession of day and night. So in Gen. ix. 9, 11. God is said to make a covenant with Noah and his family, and with the beasts of the earth, that all flesh should not be cut off any more by the waters of a flood ; which can mean nothing more than the appointment and decree of God in this matter. And again in Numb. xviii. 19, the same thing is said to be a statute and a covenant, and in the 8th verse an ordinance ; respecting the portion of the Priests and Levites. So that the word covenant is not always to be understood in a strict sense. Thus in the text in question, when it is said, Behold I make a new covenant, as it refers to *the gospel*, or New Testament dispensation, by way of distinction from the old covenant or Old Testament dispensation, it is not necessary that

we should understand any thing more by it than dispensation : and it certainly means no more.

2. That the use of the word covenant might be more consonant with that legal dispensation, than that of a Testament Especially.

3. As the prophet was about to draw a comparison between the two dispensations, in order to shew the pre eminence of the one to the other : since the old was known to that people by the word covenant, it was natural to express the new by the same term.

4. And lastly, That it might seem odd to speak of a Testament, while the Testator was yet living ; as the apostle observes in these words ; " For where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of a Testator. For a Testament is of force after men are dead ; otherwise it is of no strength at all, while the Testator liveth." Heb. ix. 16, 17.

In exact consistency herewith we find, that when our blessed Lord and Saviour was about to lay down his life, and considered himself as already dead, at the time of the institution of the Lord's Supper, he lays aside the use of the word covenant, and takes up the more proper word Testament, saying, This is my blood of the New Testament, Mat. xxvi. 28. and from thence forward the word Testament is constantly used when reference is had to the dispensation of Grace*.

* The words covenant and testament seem to be used rather promiscuously in our English translation

Hence it is, that we so often read of heirs; as, heirs of God, Rom. viii. 17. Heirs according to the promise, Gal. iii. 29. Fellow heirs, Eph. iii. 6. By his grace we should be made heirs, Tit. iii. 7. Heirs of salvation; Heb. i. 14. Heirs of promise, vi. 17. Heirs of the kingdom, James ii. 5 &c. A language and way of speaking perfectly consonant with a testament, but has nothing to do with a covenant.

The word covenant seems to have been introduced into the Christian religion, because it favoured of a legal strain, so acceptable to those, who are fond of terms and conditions, to be

the New Testament. The things expressed by them are three: 1. The Israelitish covenant, or Old Testament dispensation. 2. The New Testament, or its dispensation. And 3. Agreements between men.

The first, not being a covenant properly, and answering to the word *diatheke* in Greek, which signifies a testament or disposition of things, is therefore, as well as the second, always expressed by that word. But the third, as it means a covenant properly, is therefore expressed, in the Greek, by quite other words.

The first and second you have in these thirty-one places following; Mat. xxvi. 28. Mark. xiv. 24. Luke i. 72. xxii. 20. Acts iii. 25. vii. 8. Rom. ix. 5. xi. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 25. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 14. Gal. iii. 15, 17. iv. 24. Eph. ii. 12. Heb. vii. 22. viii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. ix. 4, 15, 16, 17, 20. x. 16, 29. xii. 84. xiii. 20. Rev. xi. 19. Also understood but not expressed, in the Greek, in these two places, Heb. viii. 13. ix. 1. making thirty-three places in English.

And the third you have in these three places, Mat. xxvi. 15. Luke xxii. 5. Rom. i. 13.

performed by men : while others, who do not favour legalism, yet too incautiously make use of the word covenant, in bare compliance with custom ; tho' these are generally careful to inform us, that it means a testamentary covenant, a free, absolute, unconditional covenant ; which is much the same thing as to say that is no covenant at all.

But it is sincerely to be lamented, that any, who are admirers of the glorious Redeemer, and the doctrines of grace, should be thus led astray, in imitation of those, who are at least unfavourable, if not enemies to the doctrine of the atonement.

The sum on the present head is this ; that the glorious dispensations and manifestations of the rich grace and mercy of God in Christ, contain free, absolute, and unconditional promises, of the free, rich, and unmerited gifts of God, conveyed to the heirs as legacies, in a testamentary way.

Having thus said what seems necessary on the two first heads of discourse, at least so far as our bounds will admit, we shall now come to the third and last, which is the Covenant of Redemption, made with Christ. This relates to the glorious transaction between the persons of the ever blessed Trinity, respecting the recovery and salvation of fallen man.

In Searching the scriptures, that we may draw from that pure fountain our knowledge of that wonderful discovery and unparalleled instance of rich grace, we find it spoken of under differ-

ent views. Among these that of a covenant may claim our first attention. If ever there was a covenant of grace, this is it: forasmuch as it exhibits the most glorious display of grace and mercy, that ever appeared to men or angels. If ever there was a covenant of redemption, here you find it: since the redemption of the elect was the object of it. And, on the part of Christ, it was a covenant of works too: forasmuch as the great work of redemption, the fulfilling the law of God in behalf of his people, for whom he undertook as their surety, was performed by him. As it is written, "Be surety for thy servant for good," Psal. cxix. 122. "Lord I am oppressed, undertake thou for me," Isa. xxxviii. 14. "I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 24. "The ransomed of the Lord," Isa. xxxv. 10. "And to give his life a ransom for many," Matthew xx. 28.

The principal places of the Scripture that speak of this glorious transaction between the persons of the adorable Godhead, respecting man's recovery, as a covenant, are these following: "And my covenant shall stand fast with him," Psal. lxxxix, 28. And give thee for a covenant of the people, Isa. xlii. 6. xlix. 8. Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, liv. 10. As for thee also by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit. Zech. ix. 11. Even the messenger of the covenant," Mal. iii. 1.

Now as these passages evidently refer to Christ, who is called the messenger of the cove-

nant; is said to be given for a covenant of the people; that this covenant with him should stand, even the covenant of peace, which should not be removed; and that his prisoners should be sent forth out of the pit, even by the blood of his covenant; there is no room left to doubt, but that there was, as it were, a covenant engagement entered into between the persons of the Trinity, with a view to accomplish the great work of man's redemption. And besides, there is nothing forbids admitting of a covenant here. For first, it has not a dangerous tendency, to encourage and nourish a legal strain of spirit, as the notion of a covenant made with man has. And then, there is much more room here for the idea of a covenant, than in the other case. For the parties were upon equal footing, on equal terms and equally interested; they were not under prior obligations; and they had power to perform the conditions, or engagements entered into.

It must, however, be remembered, that even here, the idea of a covenant complete in every part cannot be admitted; since the parties were not in want, nor could be benefited. Which perhaps may be the reason, why this glorious transaction is spoken of in many other places under other views. The chief of these is that of a counsel, according to these scriptures; "And and the counsel of peace shall be between them both, Zech. vi, 13. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, Act. xx, 27. The immutability of his coun-

fel, Heb. vi. 17. Being delivered by the determinate counsel of God, Acts, ii, 23.

Here we are given to understand, that the persons of the blessed Trinity held a counsel, speaking after the manner of men, to deliberate, devise, and contrive what should be done, to recover and save fallen man. In this counsel the whole scheme was adjusted and settled; who should be saved, by what means, and after what manner: even in that glorious manner, which is held forth to us in Divine Revelation, wherein the glory of all the Divine attributes is secured and even advanced, Satan defeated, and a door of hope opened to man.

Now in consequence of thus adjusting and settling the whole, there was a fixed resolution or purpose what to do. So the apostle speaks; "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," Eph. iii, 11.

Then also the blessed Redeemer was chosen or elected to the great work. Hence the prophet: "Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," Is. lxii, 1. And he was not only chosen, but also appointed thereunto, or fore-ordained, according to Peter; "Who verily was fore-ordained, before the foundation of the world," 1 Pet i, 20.

The great and glorious plan of redemption, the result of the wisdom and grace of God, being thus settled; and the Redeemer chosen and appointed; it remained to publish, reveal, and manifest the same to the world, that in the gospel especially man might see the odious nature

of sin, and repent; and might by faith look to him, on whom his help was laid, and be saved. This manifestation of the grace of God took place immediately after the fall, and became brighter and brighter in after ages, as we have seen above, until, in the fulness of time, the chosen of the Father was sent, John x. 36. received a commandment to accomplish the whole, John x, 18. he obeyed, Ps. xl. 7, 8. and was rewarded, Ps. ii. 8. Phil. ii, 9.

Now, as these latter expressions of Scripture may seem not to comport so well with the nature of a covenant, let it be remembered, that they refer, not so much to the establishment of the glorious scheme, as to the accomplishment of it. In the first the Redeemer was God, in the second God-man. For, though a person may have no claim on another, prior to some covenant or agreement, yet afterwards he may. And the person of the Redeemer is not to be considered simply as God, but rather as God-man, in the accomplishment of this glorious work. Now, in this compacity, it is not inconsistent to conceive of his being a servant, being sent, receiving a commandment, obeying and being rewarded. Nor is there any inconsistency between the notion of a counsel held to concert matters, and that of a covenant entered into; forasmuch as the latter might be the result of the former.*

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* Should any be of opinion, that as the word *covenant* is only used in the Old Testament, as bein

Above we mentioned in the general, that the whole plan or scheme of redemption, was contrived, adjusted and settled ; but it is necessary we should speak of it a little more particularly.

The great difficulty in this wonderful consultation, which would have puzzled men and angels, was to contrive a way for the venting of mercy, and at the same time leave immaculate the glory of Divine justice. The different claims of these two leading perfections of Deity, rendered the undertaking in a manner *insuperable*. But Divine wisdom interposes; as the Apostle speaks of the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii, 10; and by the unfathomable depth of its researches, finds out and produces that mysterious display of rich grace, which the angels with astonishment desire to pry into, 1 Pet. i. 12; wherein "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other," Psa. lxxxv, 10.

In the accomplishment of this glorious work, the parties in the great counsel seem to have assigned them each, or to have each one taken upon him, his separate part; *i. e.* generally speaking. To the Father it pertained to preside

more consonant to the legal dispensation, but never in the New, it ought therefore to be laid aside: I am easy; since I can see no bad consequence would follow. For I would not promote a dispute about words, when they are not of dangerous tendency. To me, however, there appears sufficient ground for the use of the word covenant here, as well in the *language of Scripture*, as in the nature of things.

over the whole and see it accomplished, send the Mediator, John x, 36, furnish him for the work Psa. xlv, 7. Col. i, 19, and uphold him therein, Isa. xlii, 1.

The Son, the second person in the glorious Trinity, was to assume human nature, answer the demands of divine justice, in behalf of his chosen ones, as their surety, and by that means bring in an everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix, 24; that God might be just, and yet the justifier, Rom. iii. 26. This he accomplished in full; receiving the approbation of the Father, that he was well pleased in him; he laid down his life, then arose from the dead, Rom. iv, 25, and therein triumphed over death and hell, and all the powers of darkness, Col. ii. 15; and ascending into heaven, Eph. iv. 8, he took his seat on the right hand of the throne of God, Heb. xii. 3; being exalted as a prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins, Acts v. 31, and make continual intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25.

And the Holy Spirit was to co-operate, in manifesting the whole to the world, and in applying the same to the chosen; namely, by enlightening their darkened understandings, working in them faith and repentance, changing their vile affections, and converting of them from the service of sin and Satan, to the service of the living God; carrying on the work of grace begun, Phil. i. 6; and keeping of them by the power of God unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5; by every means making them meet for the inherit-

tance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12; and finally bringing them to the full possession of it.

Thus my readers, we have searched the Scriptures, with reference to the covenants; and have seen, that there never was a covenant of works made with the parent of mankind; that Adam was made a subject of moral government under a law, and had a positive injunction, respecting the forbidden fruit, for the trial of his obedience. But, alas! by transgression he fell from the state of rectitude, wherein he was created; and, being constituted the public head and representative of his natural descendants, brought ruin and destruction on himself and all his posterity. But man was not left in this deplorable situation. The grace of God appeared for him. We have briefly laid before you the plan of our redemption, concerted in eternity, and brought into effect in time. You see the glorious covenant of grace, which was well ordered in all things and sure. You see the Son of God appointed to the Mediatorial work, and all grace treasured up in him for that purpose. You see him undertake; you see him accomplish the same in full; and the blessed Spirit co-operate to make effectual the whole. You have seen the gospel preached to Adam, then to the patriarchs; afterwards, though still dimly, yet with clearer light in the types and shadows of the Jewish dispensation, accompanied with prophecies and promises, until finally the whole broke forth with refulgent glory in the gospel day. Thro' the whole, from first to

last, you see the dispensations of grace to man are free, absolute, and unconditional ; the gifts of God dispensed in a testamentary way. It behoves us, therefore, each one, to prove by gospel marks, that we are of the legatees. For the marks are clear, the will firm, and the title good, to all such and none else. Through the whole you see nothing of works in a way of merit, but all of grace. Nothing of the will of man, but all of the will of God ; that we might all, and at all times, cry, Grace, grace ; and whosoever glorieth, might glory in the Lord. Such, my brethren is the method of grace.

O blessed and glorious scheme ! What a rich display have we here of the wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, mercy, pity, compassion, and condescension of God ! See the harmony of the Divine attributes in this stupenduous plan ; that is every way worthy of a God ! What shall we render unto him for such rich, unmerited grace ! Never to the endless ages of eternity, never shall we be able to render adequate compensation. O that the love of God were abundantly shed abroad in each of our hearts ; that we might admire, with astonishment admire his grace ; that we might for ever love, fear, honour, reverence, and serve him, with all the heart unfeignedly.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, thro' the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that

which is well pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever Amen.

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